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the Author.

Germantown
Sept. 29/78

SWEDENBORG AND CHANNING.

By the Same Author.

LECTURES ON THE NEW DISPENSATION.
LETTERS ON THE DIVINE TRINITY.
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SWEDENBORG

AND

CHANNING.

SHOWING

THE MANY AND REMARKABLE AGREEMENTS IN THE BELIEFS AND TEACHINGS OF THESE WRITERS.

BY

B. F. BARRETT.

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TO

The Unitarian Denomination in America:

A RELIGIOUS BODY

WITH WHICH THE AUTHOR ONCE HAD THE HAPPINESS TO BE CONNECTED, AND TO WHICH HE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES A LARGE INDEBTEDNESS; WHICH EARLY TAUGHT HIM THE PROPER FUNCTION OF REASON IN RELIGION, THE MEANING AND VALUE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF REVERENTLY HEEDING THE WHISPERS OF THE SPIRIT; AND WHOSE INCULCATIONS THROUGH PULPIT AND PRESS, AND AT ITS EXCELLENT DIVINITY SCHOOL, ENCOURAGED A FREE AND EARNEST SEARCH AFTER TRUTH, AND GAVE NEW EMPHASIS TO THE APOSTOLIC INJUNCTION,

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good,"

THIS VOLUME

Is Affectionately Inscribed.

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PREFACE.

NO person of tolerable candor, and able to appreciate the highest human excellence, can read the life of William Ellery Channing, without being impressed with the conviction that a truer, nobler, braver, wiser, saintlier man than he, or one more thoroughly devoted to the cause of truth and righteousness, never adorned the American pulpit. Men may dissent from his theological views, but I see not how it is possible for honest and right-minded people to differ as to his rare purity, simplicity, elevation and breadth of character.

And from every authentic account we have of Swedenborg's life, we may safely conclude that in purity, spirituality and general excellence of character, and in steady and ever-increasing devotion to the highest and noblest ends, he was in no respect inferior to Channing; while in respect to intellectual, and especially scientific acquirements, he was vastly superior to him.

The agreements in the beliefs and teachings of these writers, as shown in the following pages, are so numerous and so close, as naturally to awaken the suspicion — in some minds, at least — that Channing read and drew extensively from Swedenborg,— coming as he did three-quarters of a century after him. I have therefore deemed it important, and a duty also, to give this point careful

consideration. Having done so, and having reached the conclusion that he did not consciously derive any of his beliefs from Swedenborg, and never even read him with any interest, I will briefly lay before the reader the evidence which has forced me to this conviction.

1. I have inquired of persons who were on terms of closest intimacy with Dr. Channing, and who, if he had ever been an interested reader of Swedenborg, would undoubtedly have known it. Among these I may mention the name of his nephew, Rev. W. H. Channing, and that of his own son, Dr. William F. Channing. The former wrote the Memoir which I had occasion often to quote in the preparation of the present work. And in reply to a letter of inquiry from me, he says: —

"As you rightly suppose, my uncle's MSS. have all passed under my inspection, and my memories are still vivid of years of most confidential intercourse with him. If he had ever been a reader of Swedenborg, it therefore seems highly probable that the fact must have come to my knowledge. But so far as my recollection goes, neither in his conversations nor in his writings did my uncle ever refer to him, or make the least allusion to his life or doctrines. Unless, therefore, you have access to means of information unknown to me, my judgment is, that you should be very guarded in grouping Dr. C. with the religious teachers of our age, who have been influenced in the formation of their views by the illustrious Seer of Sweden.

"This judgment of mine may appear to you more trustworthy, from the consideration that I have been a student of Swedenborg's writings even from my college days; and though not a 'receiver' of his theology or his philosophy in a sense that would entitle me to be called

one of his 'disciples,' yet I am always gratefully glad to acknowledge my deep obligations to him as a spiritual and intellectual benefactor."

And the son of Dr. Channing, in answer to a letter of inquiry as to his father's knowledge and opinion of Swedenborg, after premising that he spoke with great caution, writes:—

"I can say, however, that his view agreed with the prevalent one, that Swedenborg was a visionary, in so far as his claim to special inspiration or illumination is concerned. My father was a conscientious student of religious history, and undoubtedly read what was in print and ordinarily obtainable in this country up to 1842, concerning Swedenborg. I have an impression that there was one volume of Swedenborg in his library. If so, I think it must have been either the Divine Love and Wisdom, Divine Providence, Heaven and Hell, or Conjugial Love. I cannot at present ascertain.

"Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt has reported a conversation with my father about Swedenborg, which took place at Lenox in the summer of 1842. This is a definite, authentic report, colored, of course, by Mrs. Mowatt's personality."

In another letter of later date (July 22d, 1878), the son writes, in answer to further inquiries on the same subject: —

"On the principal question raised in your letter there can be no possible doubt. My father could have drawn very little directly from Swedenborg, as he never made him a study, nor expressed interest in, or obligation to, his works,—as he would have done if Swedenborg's writings had been to him a conscious source of new truth.

"Whether he read a little more or a little less of Swedenborg's writings, there can be no doubt that he drew

little directly from them, knew them but little, and therefore valued them little,— measured by your standard or mine.

"I have the impression that there was a hard and narrow sectarian exposition of Swedenborg in Boston during my father's life, which very probably helped to obscure to him what I have since learned to consider Swedenborg's grand contributions to modern thought, *theology aside.* I mention my own view only to show that I look on my father objectively, and am scrupulously careful not to see him through the medium of any sympathies or ideas of my own."

The following is Mrs. Mowatt's report of the conversation she had with Dr. Channing about Swedenborg, only a few weeks before his death. Mrs. M. and her husband were boarding at the same hotel with Dr. C. and his family; and she says: —

"One day I was sitting on the piazza, reading aloud to Mr. Mowatt. The book was Swedenborg's Divine Providence. A slight movement behind my chair caused me to turn. Dr. Channing was leaning against the open door, apparently listening. He told me to go on, and I had no excuse for not obeying. I read for some time uninterruptedly. At length he accosted me with, 'Do you understand what you are reading?'

"I replied, 'I think I do.'

"'Do you believe it?'

"'Yes.'

"'What makes you believe it?'

"'Because *I can't help it.*'

"'That's a *woman's* reason,' he answered, laughing; 'but I believe it is the strongest you could give.'

"He then told me that he had read a portion of Swedenborg's works with great attention, and he reverenced the

author, although the doctrines had not, as yet, carried the same conviction to his mind as they had done to ours."—*Autobiography of an Actress*, pp. 182, '3.

So much for personal testimony on the question before us. And after giving it all the weight to which it is fairly entitled, and considering what deduction may properly be made from Mrs. Mowatt's report on account of her passionate admiration of Swedenborg, and her pardonable desire, therefore, to have it believed that Dr. Channing also had read some of his works "with great attention" — she does not say, "with great *interest*," — it amounts simply to this: That Dr. Channing had the then prevailing impression in regard to Swedenborg; that he had never read him enough to become at all interested in his teachings, or even to understand him; that he regarded him as an amiable and honest visionary, to whose writings he attached little or no value, and from which, therefore, he did not consciously draw any new or valuable truth.

2. Then another and different line of argument forces us to the same conclusion. Briefly stated, it is this: —

Dr. Channing was known to be remarkable alike for honesty, simplicity, independence and perfect frankness of character. He was not a man of policy, but of unswerving principle. He was not a *cunning* man in the popular acceptation of this word. He practiced none of the arts of concealment,— indeed, he seemed a total stranger to all such arts. His nature, too, was as generous as it was honest and frank. No man was ever more ready — more glad, indeed — than he, to award to every individual due meed of praise for any and every valuable contribution made by him to the common stock of knowl-

edge, and particularly to the stock of religious ideas. It is therefore inconceivable — nay, impossible — that one of his frank and generous nature, could have read Swedenborg with such interest and to such extent as to draw from him the larger portion of his best thought, and the chief staple of his theology, and die without leaving any record of his conscious obligation to the illustrious Swede; — yes, without revealing to his own family or other bosom friends, any particular interest in the great seer's writings, or even letting them know that he ever read these writings to any extent.

3. Then, we nowhere find in Dr. Channing's writings the slightest reference to, or the briefest quotation from, Swedenborg. Indeed, I am not aware that he has ever mentioned his name. And there is nothing in his phraseology — not a sentence or word to remind one of the great seer, or to indicate any familiarity with his writings.

Yet the undeniable fact remains — and the proof of it is presented in the present volume—that on *fifty-five* different subjects, covering almost the entire domain of theological doctrine, and embracing points of vital interest and importance, the teachings of these men are substantially the same, differing only in form or phraseology. There is almost a perfect coincidence of thought, along with a wide difference in expression. And what will add to the reader's wonder, is this other fact, that, on nearly every one of these points, while Swedenborg and Channing are in such close agreement, they both differ widely from the generally accepted creeds of their own day, and of preceding centuries. How, then, are their many and remarkable agreements to be accounted for, unless the latter drew largely from the writings of the former?

Swedenborg himself, I think, furnishes a satisfactory answer to this question. He assures us that every one who acknowledges the Divine and cherishes a sincere reverence for the Word, receives enlightenment from the Lord — a kind of internal revelation — more or less clear and abundant in proportion to the individual's freedom from the blinding influence of dogma, to the intensity and purity of his desire for truth, and the depth and sincerity of his devotion to all known duty. Speaking of this class of persons who receive "revelation from the Divine — *not* by a sonorous voice, but inwardly," he says: —

"This revelation is made by an enlightenment of the internal sight which is the understanding, when a man who is in the affection of truth from good, reads the Word. On such occasion enlightenment is effected by the light of heaven, which is from the Lord as a Sun there. When the understanding is illumined by this Divine light, it then perceives that to be true which is true, inwardly acknowledges it, and as it were sees it." (A. C., n. 8780.)

"Revelation means enlightenment when the Word is read, and consequent perception of truth. All the particulars of the Word in its internal sense, treat of the Lord and his kingdom; and the angels attendant on man perceive the Word according to this sense. This perception is communicated to the man who is in good, and who reads the Word with an ardent desire for truth. Hence he has enlightenment,— the intellectual faculty of his mind being open into heaven, and his internal man in consort with the angels." (Ibid., n. 8694.)

Here we have the all-sufficient explanation of the marvelous agreements pointed out in the teachings of these writers. Both were humble and independent minds, free from the domination of sect or creed. Both were devout

and earnest seekers after truth, and both lived upright and blameless lives. Both loved and honored the Word of God, and reverently listened to the whisperings of the Spirit. Therefore their interiors were open (in different degrees, however) to the illuminating influences of heaven, and the souls of both consorted with the angels. Seeing, therefore, by a kindred light, it is not strange that they should have seen many things pertaining to the higher reason — many of the truths of heaven — so nearly alike. It is, indeed, precisely what might have been expected.

But here I must not neglect to say that the quotations made from these two writers in the following pages, can give the reader no adequate conception of their relative degree of spiritual enlightenment. In many instances where I have given but one or two brief extracts from Swedenborg, I might have quoted many pages equally interesting and instructive, and in further elucidation of the same subject. And on hundreds of other subjects about which we find nothing whatever in Channing, Swedenborg has written with such a degree of fulness and such a measure and depth of wisdom, as compel me to admit that his illumination was extraordinary and special, and vastly superior to that of Channing. I say this, after a careful reading and thoughtful study of the writings of both; and I say it not in any sectarian spirit, or in the interest of any particular denomination — for I do not belong to any — but in the interest of that new and rational Christianity which so many have long been waiting for, and which has already begun to gladden and bless all open, free and reverent souls.

It is more than a hundred years since the illustrious

Swede passed from the scene of his earthly labors. And although the world has meanwhile been making unexampled progress in knowledge, civilization, intellectual and moral culture, yet his theological writings were never so much sought after, so extensively read and so highly prized by religious teachers, as at the present day. This is a well-known fact — and it is a fact of immense significance, and worthy of consideration by all thoughtful minds. And another fact of like significance, is: That all the best tendencies of religious thought and feeling for the last half century — tendencies toward larger liberty, broader views, more charitable judgments, a kindlier spirit and a higher unity — have been and still continue in the direct line of Swedenborg's inculcations. Every advanced step taken by individuals or churches, is a step towards the theology and philosophy of the Swedish sage.

There is one other question which I would affectionately urge the students of Channing to consider, who are disposed to doubt or deny Swedenborg's claim to any special illumination, and particularly his claim to a long and open intercourse with the denizens of the other world; and it is this: Do the extracts from his writings on the various topics considered in this volume, read like the ravings of a monomaniac? — for such, or something worse — an impostor — he surely must have been, if there was no valid foundation for such a claim. Or, is it conceivable that a man could rise up in a period of such darkness as prevailed a hundred years ago, and publish all the grand truths that are to be found in the writings of the gifted Channing — yes, and a hundred times more, without some extraordinary help from on High? — without some such

special illumination as that which he persistently claimed? Or is it conceivable, again, that one who rose so far above the thick darkness of the last century, as the quotations from his writings in this volume clearly prove (and these might be increased a hundred fold), could, at the very time he was writing these paragraphs of sober, solid, common sense, be under such a strange hallucination that he could not distinguish facts from fancies? — knew not the difference between objective realities and subjective states? — mistook his own mental conceptions for the veritable forms and voices of angels? — and therefore believed that he saw and conversed with the denizens of the other world, when he was merely holding communion with his own vivid imaginings. And all this, remember, *not* during the period of life when imagination is wont to take her highest flights, but at the advanced age of *sixty*, *seventy*, and *eighty* years, when she generally folds her wings and accepts the guidance of sober reason!

Now *is* this reasonable, or even conceivable? If not, then a veritable revelation of transcendent interest and importance has actually been made through Swedenborg; — a revelation not only of the deeper spiritual meanings of God's Word, but of the nature, laws and phenomena of the spiritual world. But this revelation is one which addresses itself to our rational intuitions, and asks to be received on no other ground than that of its intrinsic truth and reasonableness. And of this, every one must judge for himself, and form his own conclusion.

B. F. B.

GERMANTOWN, July 29, 1878.

THEOLOGY.

ABBREVIATIONS

OF THE TITLES OF SWEDENBORG'S WORKS QUOTED IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

A. C.	stand for	Arcana Cœlestiæ.
Ap. Ex.	"	Apocalypse Explained.
A. R.	"	Apocalypse Revealed.
H. H.	"	Heaven and Hell.
T. C. R.	"	True Christian Religion.
C. L.	"	Conjugial Love.
B. E.	"	Brief Exposition of N. C. Doctrines.
D. F.	"	Doctrine of Faith.
D. L.	"	Doctrine of Life.
D. S. S.	"	Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture.
L. J.	"	Last Judgment.
Contin. L. J.	"	Continuation of Last Judgment.
I.	"	Influx.
D. W.	"	Divine Wisdom.

SWEDENBORG AND CHANNING.

THEOLOGY.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is sufficiently apparent to all thoughtful minds, not only that the world moves, but that it has been moving for the last hundred years at an unusually rapid rate. Stupendous changes have taken place within that time, in almost every department of human thought and every sphere of human activity, — changes not only in literature, science, philosophy, the mechanic arts, commercial intercourse, and industrial processes, but changes in men's interior and most solemn convictions—in their theological and religious opinions. True, there has been no great change in the written creeds. These remain for the most part substantially as they were. But the prevailing religious beliefs of men are not what they were a century ago. These have changed, and are rapidly changing still. Abundant evidence of this is to be found in the most popular preaching of our times, in religious journals of largest influ-

ence and widest circulation, and in all our best and most acceptable religious literature.

While I am writing, one of our largest and most popular religious weeklies (*The Christian Union*) is laid upon my table, containing a remarkable sermon on the signs of the times by one of our ablest living preachers, as well as one of the closest observers of the tides and tendencies of popular belief — both religious and irreligious — from which I quote the following, which is directly in the line of my own thought: —

"A change is going on with respect to the faith of men in regard to many fundamental points of religious truth, and in regard to the whole system of educatory influences that springs up out of these. It is a change which all sects recognize. The Roman Catholic observes it with that clearness of vision which it has had in every age. Protestants recognize it — those who dread it and those who like it. It is admitted in many directions by men who declare that the old things are passed away, and that all things are become new. . . .

"This fluctuation of men [in their religious beliefs]; this wishing on their part that they knew exactly what is true; this sober and mournful regret that they find themselves sliding away from the old grounds of their fathers and grandfathers; this occasional plucking up of their loins and drawing the girdle tighter that they may keep what they have

got — this is all indicative of the change that has gone on, and is going on.

"This change is not narrow; it is not local; it is not transient. It has all the appearance of a march, of an advance, and of an advance as great as that of Judaism over Media and over Assyria; as great as that of Christianity over Judaism; as great as that of Roman Christianity over Roman idolatry; and as great as that of the Reformation over that of the hierarchal system of the medieval age."

Now a change so great and manifest, so wide and comprehensive in its reach, so steady and majestic in its march, would seem (would it not?) to indicate the dawn of a New Era. It is precisely what might be expected to result from a New Dispensation of religious truth, or the promised advent of Him who is the Truth itself, and who is beginning to break through the clouds of the letter with a brightness that dazzles and a power that awes; — "coming," agreeable to his own prediction, "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

That there is some deep and adequate cause for the change here referred to, no one can doubt. Some are satisfied that they know what that cause is,— a cause, however, not generally understood or recognized as yet. But I do not propose to discuss that problem here. I only wish to call attention to the writings of the two great religious reformers whose names are found on the title-page of this volume,

and who, under Providence, have been eminently instrumental in bringing about that much-needed theological reform which has clearly commenced, in the midst of which we are so obviously living, and whose existence and progress every careful student of religious thought is beginning to see and frankly to admit.

In another part of the sermon from which I have here quoted, the writer touches upon the history of religious development on our globe, and the adaptation of different forms of belief to the different stages of human progress. And in this connection we find the following sensible remarks, which indicate with sufficient clearness the writer's own view of the old theologies, and their utter inadequacy to men's present needs.

"A development [of religious truth] that at first meets the necessities of men, after a time ceases to meet those necessities. At the beginning it is a cradle which they can sleep in while they are yet babes; but it is too short for them to rock in when they become adults. . . . .

"I believe that to past theologies we owe a world of gratitude. They were efficient in bearing us through the times that have gone by; and they were good enough for the period in which they existed. But that there is to be nothing more known, that no more light is to break out of the Word of God or out of human experience, I do not

believe. Any system of theology which is adequate to the wants of mankind, must be a system that includes all the facts, all the light and all the truth that from any quarter dawn on the world. And if we are losing our hold upon the older systems, or a part of them, it is only that we are preparing the way to build larger, deeper, with more authority and with more power."

And I cannot resist the temptation to quote one other passage from the same discourse. Speaking of the great current of new religious thought that is sweeping through the world, unsettling old beliefs and exposing the sandy foundations on which such multitudes have builded,—a current so broad in its extent, so crescent in its progress and so resistless in its power as clearly to authenticate its divine origin — he says:—

"It is absurd to attempt to resist, to forestall, to stop, a movement which bears in its length and breadth and height and depth, and in its continuity and universality, the signs and tokens of divine impulse. The attempt to keep back the tide of the sea with a broom, or the attempt to stop the course of a river with a straw, were wisdom compared with the attempt to stop a movement which has behind it the will of God and the universal consciousness of men:"—

A passage which recalls to mind the last words I used in the last one of a series of lectures de-

livered in the city of New York nearly forty years ago, on that grand, comprehensive and altogether rational system of religious truth unfolded in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg; — words which seem even truer now than when they were first uttered, and which I may be pardoned for repeating here — as I do with increased emphasis.

"As yet this New Dispensation is only in its dawn. And although all the evil loves of men, and all the powers of hell are arrayed against its truths, yet the Omnipotent Lord Jesus is in them, and their progress however slow is sure. Skepticism may cavil; bigotry may sneer; prejudice may turn away its face in scorn; . . . but so sure as the Lord liveth and reigneth, the march of his truth is forever onward. And yonder broad river that hurries to the ocean could as easily be stopped in its career by the puny hand of man, as the onward and continually increasing progress of the truths whereof I have spoken, can be stayed by any human opposition. They may be opposed, scorned, persecuted — for so has it ever fared with truth; but they cannot be crushed nor stopped. 'Conquering and to conquer' they must ever go, until 'the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.'"

Words strictly true when spoken, and whose truth is becoming more and more evident — evident, I mean, to constantly increasing numbers — with each revolving year.

Many, no doubt, will be surprised at the coupling of these names,—SWEDENBORG and CHANNING; and still more surprised, perhaps, when they see how much there is in their beliefs and teachings to justify such coupling. And it is difficult to foresee or conjecture which class of readers will be most astonished, those of Swedenborg or those of Channing. My hope is, that the discovery of the many and remarkable agreements in their writings, as shown in the chapters following, will be alike gratifying to both classes; and that the students of the former may be induced to form a higher and truer estimate of the writings of the latter, and those of the latter be led to a more patient and thorough study of the writings of the former; and that the still larger class who know little or nothing of either of these teachers, may be induced to seek an early acquaintance with the writings of both. However this may be, the numerous and striking parallelisms discovered in their teachings, can hardly fail to be regarded as one of the curiosities, if not marvels, of modern literature; and as such, therefore, a matter of interest to the general reader.

I commence with what all will acknowledge to be a distinguishing characteristic of the Age in which we live, and which is indispensable to all theological or religious reform, to all healthy religious growth and all genuine religious life,—

II.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

SWEDENBORG was the earnest and consistent advocate of perfect liberty of thought in matters of religious belief — the rights and sacredness of the individual conscience. Freedom and rationality he declares to be the two essentially human faculties, without which man would not be man, and without the exercise of which no one can go to heaven or attain to the heavenly state. The freedom of the human will, he says, is a thing so important and sacred, that the Lord guards it in every individual "as the apple of his eye;" choosing to let his children plunge into the lowest depths of guilt and sin, rather than invade or take away their freedom. And by his own example and teachings he furnished a conspicuous illustration of the individual liberty which he so steadily inculcated.

And not only this, but his knowledge of the intimate connection and dependence of the natural upon the spiritual world, enabled him to see that greater spiritual liberty to men on earth would be one of the beneficent results of that memorable event which he was permitted to witness in the realm of causes or "World of Spirits," in 1757, and which he calls "the Last Judgment." Writing shortly after

that event, and referring to its effect upon the then future church, he says:—

"The state of the church hereafter will be unlike what it has been hitherto. It will be similar, indeed, in the outward form, but *dis*similar in the inward. Churches will continue to exist, to outward appearance divided, and their doctrines will be taught as heretofore.—But henceforth the man of the church will be *in a more free state of thinking on matters of faith*, because *spiritual liberty* has been restored to him." (L. J., n. 73.)

Again he says:—

"I have had various converse with the angels concerning the state of the church hereafter. They said they did not know what things were to come, since such knowledge belongs to the Lord alone; but that they *did* know that the slavery and captivity in which the man of the church was formerly, is removed; and that now, from *restored liberty*, he can, if he desires, better perceive interior truths, and thus become more internal." (Ibid. n. 73, 74.)

This was written more than a hundred years ago. It was uttered, not as *prophecy*, in the common acceptation of this word; but was simply the assertion of one who understood the connection between the two worlds, and could therefore readily foresee some of the consequences which would surely follow from the momentous changes he had just witnessed in "the World of Spirits." Swedenborg saw that

the bondage in which the human mind had been held for centuries, was broken, and *why* it was broken, by the Last Judgment; and that among the consequences sure to follow, the men of Christendom would enjoy greater religious liberty than they had ever before experienced; and that their increased freedom of thought would inevitably result in some modification of their religious views; — in the passing away of old and the introduction of new ideas, even among those who might still *profess* the same venerable creeds and adhere to the same ritual and the same ecclesiastical polity. Thus the churches, while remaining "similar in the outward form," would become "*dis*similar internally" — that is, dissimilar in their ideas and prevailing spirit.

And who that has made himself familiar with the progress of religious thought and the development of the Christian spirit for the last hundred years, cannot see that precisely what Swedenborg predicted has already come to pass. We all recognize the fact that there has been an immense increase of religious liberty in all branches of the Christian church within the last century; and this growing freedom has led inevitably to a change in the internal character and condition of the churches — a change in thought, feeling and purpose; while in their outward form — in administration, creed and ritual, they have continued substantially as they were before.

And foremost among the brave vindicators of the sacred right of private judgment and the prerogatives of the individual conscience, stands the name of William Ellery Channing. It is safe to say that no other teacher ever did half as much as did this great apostle of religious liberty, to free the American people from a state of degrading thraldom to old dogmas, and to promote freedom of thought and inquiry in matters of religion. Entering upon public life at a time when earnest and thoughtful men and women in New England and elsewhere were beginning to question some of the dogmas taught by Calvin and his followers — such as unconditional election and reprobation, a partial and vindictive Deity, vicarious atonement, and salvation by faith alone — and in consequence of which the conservatives of that day were becoming alarmed, and the spirit of intolerance and persecution was beginning to be revived, Channing stood forth the fearless and uncompromising champion of free thought. He battled not so much for any particular doctrine or system of doctrines, as for the right of every man to exercise his God-given freedom on matters of faith, and accept whatever conclusions might seem to him true and wholesome. He was the bold and persistent advocate of intellectual and religious liberty. In defence of this he was willing to be scorned and hated and persecuted — yes, and to have his name cast out as evil. He was the very embodiment of

the spirit which Swedenborg had exemplified more than a half century before, and which he had predicted was to be the heritage of the Church of the Future. And to his dauntless courage, brave words and tireless opposition to spiritual and ecclesiastical tyranny, more than to the labors of any other man, the cause of religious freedom in our country is indebted for its past progress and present strength. Every page of his writings is instinct with the spirit of this freedom, and scores of illustrative passages, like the following, might be quoted from his writings: —

"It is true that I have a strong and growing conviction of the importance of the prominent religious doctrines which I teach. But another principle has operated on my mind more strongly than a zeal for any particular opinions, and this is my attachment to the cause of *religious liberty.* To vindicate the rights of the mind, to maintain intellectual freedom, to withstand intolerance and the spirit of persecution, to save our churches from spiritual despotism, — this has been nearer my heart than to secure a triumph to any distinguishing doctrine of a sect."

"I feel deeply the imperfections of all classes and denominations; and the hopes of Christianity rest on the courage and piety of men who, disclaiming all human authority and the fetters of all creeds, give themselves to deliberate, devout, fearless study of God's Word, in connection with his works and prov-

idence. Freedom of intellect, joined with obedience to whatever truth is already known, is the appointed spirit and energy by which the church and the world are to be disenthralled from the many errors which yet darken and impair its ennobling influence." (*Memoirs of Channing*, Vol. II., pp. 359, 361.)

"Jesus Christ asserted and proclaimed the rights of every rational being, and summoned human Reason to its great function of deliberate inquiry into the 'deep things of God.' The human mind was made for Truth. Its nature is as expansive as the air we breathe. . . . . What progress it is to make under the increased freedom which it begins to enjoy, one hardly dares to conjecture. That it is to gain ever brighter light; that it will throw off the gloomy errors of theology, which have shut it in like dungeon walls for ages, and will embrace a Christianity incomparably purer and nobler than we now hold, I cannot doubt. That Age of Light will understand, as we cannot, what is the worth of the intellectual liberty which Christ came to bestow." (*The Perfect Life*, pp. 234, '5.)

And the spirit of intellectual and religious liberty was as beautifully exemplified in this man's life and practice, as it was eloquently inculcated in his discourses.

But before Channing was born Swedenborg had, hundreds of times, inculcated the same principle, and strongly emphasized its importance. He had in-

sisted on the sacredness of the rights of conscience and the freedom of the individual soul; and declared any invasion of this freedom or infringement of these rights to be a great and cruel wrong. He had taught that intellectual and religious liberty is essential to all moral and religious growth; that its exercise is among the most sacred, not only of human rights but of human duties; that "it is this freedom, through which, in which, and with which the 'Lord dwells,' with man — in his soul;" that it is not only the right but the duty of every individual, when arrived at maturity, to examine for himself the religious doctrines in which he has been educated, and freely accept what seems to him good and true, and as freely reject the opposite; and that this duty is the more imperative because of the many and hurtful errors which the decrees of ecclesiastical Councils have introduced into the church.

Thus he says: —

"They who love truth for its own sake and for the sake of life, consequently for the sake of the Lord's kingdom, ... search the Word for the sole purpose of learning truth therefrom; and hence they derive their faith and conscience. If any one tells them they should remain in the doctrinals of the church wherein they were born, they think within themselves that, had they been born in Judaism, Socinianism, Quakerism, Christian Gentilism, or even outside the church, they would have been

told the same thing by those among whom they were born; it being the general cry, Here is the church! Here is the church! Here are truths, and nowhere else! This being the case, they conclude that the Word ought to be searched with devout prayer to the Lord for enlightenment. Such persons do not disturb any one within the church, nor do they ever condemn others [for believing differently from themselves]; for they know that every one who is a church, lives according to his own faith." (A. C., n. 5432. See also T. C. R., n. 177, 489, 498, 634; A. C., n. 5402, 7298; D. P., n. 71–97; A. R., n. 776, 914.)

III.

REASON IN RELIGION VINDICATED.

BEFORE the memorable year 1757 (the time from which the illustrious Swede dates "the Last Judgment"), it was an established tenet in all the churches, Protestant as well as Catholic, that religious doctrines were not to be scrutinized by the eye of reason; that they (some of them at least) were profound mysteries which people must not expect to understand, and should not, therefore, "pry into;" that they were to be accepted blindly, not rationally; that, in such matters the understanding

was to be held in subjection to faith. And there was good reason for this; for the generally accepted beliefs were not such as would stand the test of rational examination. Therefore it became the habit of religious teachers, when closely questioned about their doctrines, to deny the lawfulness or propriety of exercising our human reason in matters of religious belief, and to seek shelter behind that much abused, but very convenient word, *mystery*.

Swedenborg lays the axe at the root of this pernicious tree. He boldly announces himself as the herald of a New Dispensation — a dispensation of *rational* religious truth; and throughout his writings he insists on the freest and most faithful exercise of the understanding in matters of faith. He repudiates, as a false and pernicious dogma, the prevalent idea of his day, that religious doctrines were not to be subjected to the scrutiny of reason, or brought within the grasp of the intellect; and insists that spiritual truth should be *seen*, or received rationally. Speaking of the New Church whose dawn he heralded, and whose doctrines he claims to have been specially commissioned to reveal, he says: —

"In the New Church this tenet, that the understanding must be kept in subjection to faith, is to be rejected; and in place of it this is to be received as a maxim, that the truth of the church should be *seen* before it is received; and truth cannot be seen otherwise than rationally. . . . Who can acknowledge

truth and retain it unless he sees it? And what is truth not seen but a voice not understood?" (A. R., n. 564.)

And everywhere throughout his writings he insists on the importance of receiving religious truth *rationally;* that is, of exercising our reason on whatever is presented us for truth, or of *seeing* it with the eye of the mind before we accept it. And he declares that a blind belief is dangerous, and unworthy to be called a belief.

"Shut people's eyes," he says, "stop their ears, that is, induce them not to think from any understanding, and then tell those impressed with some idea of eternal life whatever you will, and they will believe it; yes, even if you should tell them that God can be angry and breathe vengeance; that He can inflict eternal damnation upon any one; that He requires to be moved to pity by his own Son's blood; . . . with other like extravagances. But open your eyes and unstop your ears, that is, think of these things from your understanding, and you will straightway see their utter disagreement with the truth." (D. F., n. 46.)

He says that no one in heaven accepts for truth anything which does not satisfy the demands of his intellect.

"All in heaven see truths with the understanding, and so receive them [that is, rationally]; but what they do not see with the understanding, they do not

receive. And if any one says to them that they must have faith, although they neither see nor understand, they turn away, saying: How is that possible? What I see or understand, I believe; but I cannot believe what I do not see nor understand." (Ap. Ex., n. 239. See also D. P., n. 73–88. A. R., 564, 914. Ap. Ex., 1100, 232, 242, 759. D. F., 46, '7, '8. A. C., 5432.)

And throughout his theological writings the great seer earnestly vindicates the claims of reason, and insists on the faithful exercise of the understanding in all our religious inquiries. He emphatically repudiates and condemns the old dogma that we are to believe blindly, or that, in religious matters, the understanding should be held in servile subjection to faith. He constantly urges the freest exercise of our rational faculties as an imperative duty, and counsels us to accept for religious truth nothing against which our reason revolts, or which fails to commend itself to our rational intuitions.

And Channing, writing more than a half century later, saw with equal clearness the same inspiring truth. He saw that reason should never be divorced from, but always go hand in hand with, religion. And ever and anon he flashes this truth across his page with electric power and brilliancy. Nowhere, prior to Swedenborg's time, is there to be found such a noble vindication of the claims of reason, and

its rightful exercise in the domain of religious inquiry, as in the writings of this man. To set people *a-thinking* upon religious subjects, and to convince them that this is no sin — nay, that it is their imperative *duty* to think; and to subject venerable and widely received doctrines to the test of both reason and Scripture — this seems to have been his high and noble mission. And rarely if ever was mission more faithfully fulfilled. The writer takes pleasure in acknowledging his own large indebtedness to this great quickener of religious thought and indefatigable worker for theological reform.

To those familiar with the writings of Channing, quotations here are needless. And to those who are not, it may be sufficient to say that scores of passages like the following might be cited from his published works, vindicating the legitimate function and just rights of human reason in the sacred domain of religion: —

"We object strongly to the contemptuous manner in which human reason is often spoken of by our adversaries, because it leads, we believe, to universal skepticism. If reason be so dreadfully darkened by the fall, that its most decisive judgments on religion are unworthy of trust, then Christianity, and even natural theology, must be abandoned. . . . We honor revelation too highly to make it the antagonist of reason, or to believe that it calls us to renounce our highest powers."

"The worst errors, after all, have sprung up in that church which proscribes reason, and demands from its members implicit faith. The most pernicious doctrines have been the growth of the darkest times, when the general credulity encouraged bad men and enthusiasts to broach their dreams and inventions, and to stifle the faint remonstrances of reason by the menaces of everlasting perdition. Say what we may, God has given us a rational nature, and will call us to account for it. We may let it sleep, but we do so at our peril." (*Works*, Vol. III., pp. 66, 67.)

IV.

STATE OF THE CHURCH.

SWEDENBORG saw that the minds of the great mass of Christians in his day, were immersed in spiritual darkness. The clouds of error had been gathering, he says, for many centuries; and all true ideas of God, his character, kingdom and government, of the grandeur and capabilities of the human soul, of the laws of the regenerate life or the nature and way of human salvation, of the true meaning of the Sacred Scripture, of the nature of heaven and hell—of everything, in short, connected with man's spiritual welfare—were well-nigh blotted out. He says that the church throughout Christendom had reached that

state of spiritual darkness which corresponds to the extinction or eclipse of the heavenly luminaries, and which was symbolized and foreshadowed by the prophetic language: "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven;"—language which, according to his interpretation, has reference entirely to that cold, dark and desolate state of the church which was to immediately precede the coming Dawn, or the advent of that spiritual and rational truth which was to break through the clouds of the latter. Referring to the state of the church as it was in his day, he says:—

"Such an abomination of desolation exists to-day in the Christian church, that there is not a single genuine truth remaining in it; and unless a new church shall be raised up in the place of the present one, no flesh could be saved, according to the Lord's words in Matthew xxiv. 22. That the Christian church as it is to-day, is so far consummated and devastated, cannot be seen by those on earth who have confirmed themselves in its falsities; because the confirmation of falsity is the denial of truth, and therefore veils, as it were, the understanding." (T. C. R., n. 758.)

He saw that the principle of charity or unselfish love which constitutes the very essence of the Gospel, and of which Jesus Christ was Himself the living embodiment, was utterly unknown to the great mass of Christians in his day; that selfish-

ness, bigotry, intolerance, lust of dominion — all the evils which defile the sanctuary of the Lord — had invaded the church; and that, through the predominance of these evils the Word of God had been misunderstood and falsified throughout; and the church had therefore reached its end or consummation, had ceased to be a church — having become emptied of those heavenly and life-giving principles which are essential to its very existence.

"The consummation of the church," he says, "takes place when there remains no divine truth except what is falsified or rejected; and where there is no genuine truth, genuine good is impossible,— for good is the essence of truth, and truth is the form of good. Good and truth can no more be separated than will and understanding. — Consequently, when truth is consummated in the church, [or falsified in human minds], good is also consummated [or extinguished] there; and when this is done, the church comes to an end, that is, it is consummated." (T. C. R., n. 753.) "The consummation of the age means the last time of the church" [or that state of spiritual darkness signified by *night*]; "and inasmuch as the present Christian church is the night, it follows that the morning, that is to say, the beginning of a new church, is now at hand." (Ibid., n. 757, 764.)

And fifty years later, after the shades of night had

begun to disappear before the dawn of the New Day, how did the Christian church appear to the clear perception of Channing? By virtue of that spiritual intuition with which he was so largely gifted, and which is the promised heritage of all the pure in heart, he saw the still prevalent errors and corruptions of the church with a distinctness and exposed them with a fidelity scarcely inferior to that of Swedenborg. He employed different language, it is true; he said nothing about the "consummation" or "end" of the church; but his meaning was substantially the same as that of the Swedish seer. He speaks of "the almost endless errors which have darkened theology;" of the prevailing theology of his time, as a system which "takes from us our Father in heaven, and substitutes a stern and unjust lord;" as "a system which makes existence a curse, and wraps the universe in gloom;" of "the gross and cherished corruptions by which Christianity is at this moment dishonored;" of "the human inventions" by which it is still disfigured; of the "much rubbish" by which it is encumbered; of "the earth-born fogs" by which it "has long been shrouded;" but he cherishes the hope of a new and brighter day — of a "glorious reformation in the church"— and earnestly prays "that God will overturn the strongholds of spiritual usurpation," and that "the servile assent so long yielded to human creeds, may give place to honest

and devout inquiry into the Scriptures." Many illustrative passages might be cited, but one or two will suffice.

"Much stubble is yet to be burned; much rubbish to be removed; many gaudy decorations which a false taste has hung around Christianity, must be swept away; and the earth-born fogs which have long shrouded it, must be scattered, before this divine fabric will rise before us in its native and awful majesty, in its harmonious proportions, in its mild and celestial splendors. This glorious reformation in the church, we hope, under God's blessing, from the progress of the human intellect, from the moral progress of society, from the consequent decline of prejudice and bigotry, and, though last not least, from the subversion of human authority in matters of religion, from the fall of those hierarchies and other human institutions by which the minds of individuals are oppressed under the weight of numbers, and a Papal dominion is perpetuated in the Protestant church. Our earnest prayer to God is, that He will overturn, and overturn, and overturn the strongholds of spiritual usurpation, until He shall come whose right it is to rule the minds of men; that the conspiracy of ages against the liberty of Christians may be brought to an end;—and that Christianity, thus purified from error, may put forth its almighty energy, and prove itself, by its ennobling influence on the mind, to be indeed the

power of God unto salvation." (*Works*, Vol. III., pp. 102, '3.)

Again, in a letter to Dr. Tuckerman, written from Rhode Island, in the summer of 1827, he says: —

"The effect of the quiet thought to which I give myself here, is to make me more sensible to the thick darkness which overspreads the Christian world. I seem to discover as many errors in practical as in dogmatic religion. The false theology which has prevailed for ages, is burying us all in night. But the corruptions which we are trying to expose in the popular system, are perhaps but superficial, compared with those which remain unrecognized and which we all inherit. The true reformation, I apprehend, is yet to come." (*Memoirs*, Vol. III., p. 391.)

And in other portions of his writings Channing makes sufficiently plain what he means by the "stubble" that is yet to be burned, the "rubbish" that is to be removed, and the "earth-born fogs" that are to be scattered before the true and living church will be seen, or before the "divine fabric of Christianity will rise before us . . . . in its mild and celestial splendors." For when he comes to speak of the old and generally accepted doctrines of religion, — doctrines that had dominated the mind of Christendom for centuries, and were still set forth in the creeds, taught from the pulpits and proclaimed from the most popular chairs of theology — such as, the resurrection of the material body, the triperson-

ality of God, the vicarious atonement, original sin, the imputation of the merits of Christ, unconditional election and reprobation, an angry and vindictive Deity, justification by faith alone, baptismal or instantaneous regeneration, a hell of literal fire and brimstone, admission into heaven by immediate mercy, the damnation of *some* infants and of *all* the heathen, and other kindred doctrines — he boldly denies and rejects them all. He exposes with great plainness the fallacy of the arguments resorted to in support of these widely-spread and long-established beliefs, and shows conclusively their utter disagreement with Scripture and reason and human experience and the accepted laws of the human soul, and with our highest conceptions of the love and wisdom and mercy of God.

But these venerable doctrines had all been repudiated by Swedenborg more than fifty years before Channing wrote, and their disagreement with reason and Scripture openly proclaimed and clearly demonstrated.

V.

TRIPERSONALITY OF GOD.

CHANNING believed in, and throughout his teachings earnestly insisted on, the strict personal UNITY of God. To this truth he says, "we give infinite importance, and feel ourselves bound to take heed lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy." He regarded the popular doctrine as alike irrational and unscriptural, and of hurtful tendency—though he did not see that this, more than any other doctrine, was what had darkened and deranged the entire system of Christian theology. This doctrine seemed to him a positive denial of the unity of God, and an assertion of the existence of three Gods. After a brief but fair statement of the commonly received doctrine in one of his discourses, he says:—

"Here, then, we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills and different perceptions, performing different acts and sustaining different relations; and . . . . when we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we can do nothing more than represent to ourselves three agents, distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities to those which separate the persons of the Trinity." (*Works*, Vol. III., pp. 70, 71.)

But more than a half century earlier, Swedenborg

had declared the popular belief on this subject to be a belief in three Gods; and he traced the numerous errors and corruptions of Christian theology to this fundamental falsity. He says that "the idea of three Gods has principally arisen from the Athanasian Creed, where a trinity of persons is taught, for the word *person* begets such an idea." And after quoting the words of that Creed, and showing that "there arises thence no other idea than that there are three Gods unanimous and agreeing together," he proceeds:—

"That the whole system of Christian theology at this day is founded on an idea of three Gods, is evident from the doctrine of justification which is the principal of the doctrinals of the Christian church, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants. That doctrine sets forth that God the Father sent his Son to redeem and save mankind, and gives the Holy Spirit to operate the same. Every man who hears, reads or repeats this, cannot but in thought or idea divide God into three, and suppose that one God sent another and operates by a third. That the same thought of a Divine Trinity distinguished into three Persons, each of whom is God, is continued throughout the rest of the doctrinals of the present church, as from a head into its body, will be demonstrated in its proper place." (B. E., n. 35.)

And the following are among the propositions

affirmed in the same treatise, and briefly analyzed and demonstrated: —

"VI. That, after the idea of a Trinity of Persons and the consequent idea of three Gods, has been rejected, and the idea of one God . . . received in its stead, the tenets of the aforesaid [or popular] Theology are seen to be erroneous.

"VII. That then the true and saving faith, which is a faith in one God, united with good works, may be acknowledged and received.

"IX. That the faith of the present day has separated religion from the Church, since religion consists in the acknowledgment and worship of one God from faith grounded in charity.

"XI. That from the faith of the present Church there results a worship of the mouth and not of the life; yet the worship of the mouth is accepted by the Lord only in proportion as it proceeds from the worship of the life.

"XIV. That the doctrine of the faith of the present Church ascribes to God human attributes; as that He regarded man from anger, and required to be reconciled; that He is reconciled through the love He bore his Son and by the intercession of the latter; that He required to be appeased by the sufferings of his Son, and thus to be brought back to mercy; and that He imputes the righteousness of his Son to an unrighteous man who supplicates it from faith alone.

"XV. That from the faith of the present Church monstrous births have been and may still be produced; such as instantaneous salvation by an act of immediate mercy; predestination; the notions that God has no respect to men's works, but to faith alone; that there is no connection between charity and faith; that man in conversion is like a stock; with many more heresies of the same kind; . . . and that the heresies from the first times of the church to the present day, have sprung from no other source than the idea of three Gods.

"XVII. That the infestation from falsities and the consequent eclipse of every truth, or the desolation which at this day prevails in the Christian churches, is what is meant by the great affliction such as was not from the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be, Matt. xxiv. 21.

"XXII. That the opening and rejection of the faith of the present Church, and the revelation and reception of the tenets of the faith of the New Church [with a life conformable thereto], is what is meant by these words in the Apocalypse: 'He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new, xxi. 5.'"

And the agreement between Swedenborg and Channing in the doctrines they respectively affirmed and emphasized, was (with one or two exceptions which we shall refer to hereafter) scarcely less remarkable than in those they rejected as irrational and false, as will be seen from the passages cited by way of illustration.

VI.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

THROUGHOUT his writings Swedenborg represents God as an infinitely wise, tender and loving Father. He declares that the essential Divine life is none other than Love itself — pure, disinterested Benevolence — the love of imparting itself with its unspeakable delights to the countless host of beings which it has created and is forever creating. This infinite and matchless love, he says, is perpetually guided in its operations by a wisdom equally matchless and infinite. God creates and governs the universe from pure love and according to perfect wisdom, that is, *from Himself*. Love and wisdom or goodness and truth are his essential attributes — the very substance of his Being — united like the heat and light of the sun, or like the will and understanding of man. Therefore He can never act toward any of his creatures from a feeling of anger, hatred or revenge, as this would be acting contrary to his essential nature. And where such feelings are attributed to Him in the literal sense of Scripture, it is simply an *appearance* of the truth — an appearance corresponding with and produced by the disorderly states of those towards whom He is said to exercise such feelings. Just as the cheerful

and benignant face of the sun appears wrathful and tormenting to him who looks at it with a diseased eye. The torment is real to the sufferer, and the sun *appears* to be the cause. But that appearance will change and the real truth become manifest, soon as the diseased eye is restored to health, and to consequent harmony with the great orb of day. Speaking of those "who separate faith from good works" and "who blaspheme the Word by the falsification thereof," he says: —

"They believe that the Divine removed or rejected mankind from Himself, when yet God is love itself, mercy itself, and goodness itself; and these are his *esse*. From which it is evident that it is impossible for Him to remove or reject any of the human race, for this would be to act against his own *esse* or being, which is that from which all love, mercy and goodness flow. It is not possible even for an angel to act thus, nor for any man who is in love, mercy and goodness from the Lord, when yet their love is finite and the Divine Love is infinite.

"The removal or rejection of mankind by God the Father they call vindictive justice, of which they entertain no other idea than as of a king or judge revenging an evil offered to himself, consequently as of their vengeance in which there cannot but be somewhat of anger. To confirm this they adduce passages from the Word where God is called avenger, revengeful, jealous, angry, wrathful and the like;

which passages they falsify, since such things in the literal sense are said merely according to appearances. For the case is thus: If a man, after death when he becomes a spirit, is in evils in consequence of his life in the world, he then turns away from the Lord; and when he averts himself from Him and denies Him, he can no longer be in his keeping or protection, since his evil punishes him; for in evil is the punishment of evil, as in goodness is the reward of goodness. And since the punishment of evil from evil, that is from those who are evil, *appears* as if it was punishment from the Divine, therefore according to this appearance it is said in the Word concerning the Divine Being, that He is angry, condemns, casts into hell, and the like; . . . and yet He is not angry, does not condemn, does not punish or cast into hell, since it is evil that punishes itself." (Ap. Ex., n. 778.)

And everywhere in Channing's writings we find the same benignant character ascribed to God. He is represented as "the Perfect Goodness," "the Infinite Love," "the Pure Reason," "the Universal Light;" — as loving and forever seeking to save and bless all his rational creatures, however they may reject his counsels and trample on his laws. Many illustrative passages might be given, but the following will suffice: —

"God is the Infinite Moral Will, — pure, unmixed Goodness, — pure Reason [Wisdom] and Love, abid-

ing in the peace of calm, unchanging, eternal rectitude. . . The Divine Love is the love of a God, infinite love, infinite in its energy, intenseness, variety, extent, duration, its all-vivifying, all-recreating power. . . . We can never form even a faint conception of the Heavenly Father, until we rise to the idea of Perfect Goodness as the fountain of a love that pours forth forever rich, free, unbounded communications of its own blessedness, that warms, embraces, quickens, exalts all creatures." (*Memoirs*, Vol. III., p. 404.)

"The truth is that God loves equally all human beings, of all ranks, nations, conditions and characters; that the Father has no favorites and makes no selections; that in his very being He is Impartial and Universal Love. This is the fundamental Truth of the Christian Religion, entering into and glorifying all its other truths." (*The Perfect Life*, p. 67.)

VII.

UNION WITH AND LIKENESS TO GOD.

SWEDENBORG has much to say of man's "conjunction" or union with God, which takes place in the degree that we receive into our souls the Divine love and wisdom, or are renewed in the spirit and temper of our minds after the image of Him that created us. We were made, he says, to be sharers of the

Divine likeness, to be fellow-laborers with God in the sublime work of forming a heaven of angels; — the work of enlightening, purifying and elevating human souls, and training them for the skies. Our wills were created to be the recipients of the Divine love which is pure and unselfish — the love of imparting itself with its ineffable delights unto others; and our understandings were created to be the recipients of the Divine wisdom or truth. And in the degree that the understanding (or head) is enlightened by God's wisdom, and the will (or heart) is filled and animated by his unselfish love, the individual is regenerated — created anew in the Divine likeness. And he is then in like degree spiritually conjoined to God; in thought, feeling and purpose, he is *at-one* with the Divine Mind. But this spiritual renewal or great *At-one-ment*, he tells us, is never suddenly attained; nor is such a measure thereof ever reached, that there can be no further progress in the same direction. It is a gradual process which takes place in the degree that we learn and religiously obey the laws of the soul's higher life — the laws of divine and neighborly love. This is the uniform teaching of Swedenborg, repeated hundreds of times in his writings. To cite only two or three brief passages: —

"An image of God is a receptacle of God. And as God is love itself and wisdom itself, an image of Him is the reception of love and wisdom in that receptacle. Love and wisdom or the good and the

true in man, appear to him as his own; and this causes him to be man, and makes him capable of union with God." (T. C. R., n. 48.)

"Furthermore, what is faith but conjunction with God by truths belonging to the understanding and thence to thought? And what is love but conjunction with Him by goods which belong to the will and thence to affection? God's conjunction with man is a spiritual conjunction within the natural." (Ibid., n. 369.)

"Conjunction takes place according to this saying of the Lord: 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; . . . . and I will love him and will manifest myself unto him: . . . . and we will make our abode with him,' John xiv. 21–23. The Lord's commandments all relate to love to the neighbor, the sum of which is not to do him evil but good." (Ibid., n. 458.)

And substantially the same teaching is to be found in many places in Channing's writings, and is clearly implied in many more. And it holds in his teachings about the same prominence, relatively, as in the teachings of Swedenborg. He says that "goodness consists in *union with God* and his whole spiritual family;" that it is the glory and nobleness of the human soul "to be *joined to Him* in purposes of beneficence—swallowed up in a pure, overflowing love." In his sermon on "Likeness to God," he

affirms "that the true religion consists in proposing, as our great end, a growing *likeness* to the Supreme Being;" "that the great work of religion is, to conform ourselves to God, or to unfold the divine likeness within us;" and that there may be such a regenerated and perfected state of the soul as "constitutes it a bright image of God." And he thinks that "the importance of this assimilation to our Creator" cannot be over-estimated.

"Likeness to God," he says, "is the supreme gift. He can communicate nothing so precious, glorious, blessed, as Himself. To hold intellectual and moral affinity with the Supreme Being, to partake his spirit, to be his children by derivations of kindred excellence, ... this is a felicity which obscures and annihilates all other good. . . . . God becomes a real being to us, in proportion as his own nature is unfolded within us. To a man who is growing in the likeness of God, faith begins even here to change into vision. He carries within himself a proof of a Deity, which can only be understood by experience." (*Works*, Vol. III., p. 229.)

"Is it enough to admire and praise [the Divine perfections]? Do we not most efficiently manifest our esteem by seeking to become what we praise, by transcribing into our lives the perfections of God, by copying his wisdom in the judicious pursuit of good ends, his justice in the discharge of all our obligations, and his benevolence in the diffusion of all

possible happiness around us? Then is our love of God the most exalted, when in our several spheres we aim to be like Him, to reflect his glory, to act for the great end for which He is ever active, the improvement and happiness of every being within our influence." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 13.)

"There is something most affecting in the thought of resembling God. . . . . And this thought is not presumptuous. The purity, the virtue to which we are called in the gospel, and which men have in a measure attained, is *the same in nature* with that which constitutes the glory of God. In particular, that disinterested love, that diffusive benevolence, to which Jesus Christ so emphatically calls us, forms the highest glory of the Divine character. . . . . By Christian goodness we are made partakers of God's nature, we shine with a ray of his light, we share his highest perfection, we become temples of the Divinity, God dwells in us. . . . . Christian virtue constitutes us his children by making us like Him." (Ibid.)

And Channing teaches, as did Swedenborg many years before, that the attainment of a moral likeness to God, is not an instantaneous or sudden, but a gradual and progressive work. We approach this likeness, he says, "by every right exertion of the powers He gives us," "invigorating the understanding by honestly and resolutely seeking the truth," "invigorating the conscience by following it in opposition to the passions," "warring against a habit

or desire which is strengthening itself against our higher principles." (Ibid., p. 245.) "All good comes from God; but it comes through the powers which He bestows, and through his blessing on the faithful use of them. The character is never changed in a moment, or without our own activity." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 8.)

VIII.

WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD.

THE Scripture teaches that to love God with all the heart, and the neighbor as one's self, is the sum and substance of all the divine precepts. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Yet few Christians seem to have any distinct idea of what it is to love the Lord supremely. Few seem to understand that it is to love truth, sincerity, justice, benevolence — all those sacred and vital principles which come from God, and which, when received by men, make them angels — images and likenesses of the Heavenly Father. Nor have Christians generally known that these divine principles are truly loved only so far as they are carried into practice — ultimated in our daily lives and actions. But Swedenborg is very full and explicit in his teaching on this subject. He says: —

"So far as a man shuns and is averse to unlawful

gains acquired by fraud and craft, he wills what is sincere, right and just; and at length he begins to love what is sincere because it is sincere, what is right because it is right, and what is just because it is just, for the reason that they are from the Lord and the love of the Lord is in them. For to love the Lord is not to love his person, but it is to love those things which proceed from Him, for these are the Lord with man; thus it is to love what is itself sincere, what is itself right, what is itself just; and since these things are the Lord, therefore in proportion as a man loves them and acts from them, he acts from the Lord; and in the same proportion the Lord removes things insincere and unjust, even as to the intentions and will wherein they have their roots." (Ap. Ex., n. 973.)

"By loving the Lord is not meant to love Him as a person, but it is to love the divine good and truth which are the Lord in heaven and in the church. And these two principles are not loved by knowing them, thinking them, understanding them and speaking them, but by willing and doing them." (Ibid., n. 1099.) "The angels know that to love the Lord is nothing else but to do the good works which are uses, saying that uses are the Lord with them. . . . Love is continually going and returning by deeds which are uses, since to love is to do." (D. L., § xiii.)

And how does this differ from Channing's belief and teaching on the same subject, as set forth in the following passages, and often in other parts of his writings?

"What is God's character, the character which we are to love, . . . but the very dispositions in their fulness, which conscience enjoins upon every man, and which form what we call rectitude? . . . To love God has been thought something quite distinct from loving our neighbor, loving our duty, loving right and worthy actions. But they are not to be divided. To love God is the same thing as to love rectitude, for God is rectitude; this is the central principle of his character. . . . The love of God is but another name for the love of essential benevolence and justice." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 15.)

"God's *will* must be trusted and obeyed; then does He come forth to us, manifest Himself to us. . . . He cannot be loved, except as virtue, goodness, moral perfection is loved." (Ibid., Vol. III., p. 405.) "The true love of God perfectly coincides, and is in fact the same thing, with the love of virtue, rectitude and goodness." (Ibid., Vol. III., p. 95.)

And in Channing's as in Swedenborg's view, the love of God is identical with the love of Christ. Whoever loves supremely the perfect moral excellence embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, loves and practices the precepts of Christ,—loves truth, justice, sincerity, benevolence—loves all moral ex-

cellence, all divine human qualities, and seeks, by the Divine aid, to have them incorporated into his own soul. And this, according to Swedenborg, is the true love of God. And if it be also the true love of Christ, as Channing teaches, then the supreme love of Christ must be the supreme love of God. Take for illustration the following from "The Perfect Life:"

"But let not this regard to Christ be misunderstood. Especially let it not be separated in our thoughts from obedience to his Precepts, or be exalted in our esteem above general Rectitude. The truth is, the love of CHRIST is but another name for the love of VIRTUE. . . . The CHARACTER of Christ *is* PERFECT Virtue. And consequently attachment to Christ, as I have just said, is but another name for attachment to Virtue. . . . To love Jesus Christ, is to love Him in whom Human Virtue was revealed in its PERFECTION, and who came that He might communicate to us what was most perfect in his own mind. It is to love disinterestedness, self-sacrifice and unbounded charity. . . . It is to love calmness, constancy, fortitude and magnanimity" (pp. 274, '5); in other words, it is to love "perfect Virtue," or all that is known of God's moral perfections. And to love these, and live accordingly, is to love God.

IX.

THE ESSENTIAL THING IN RELIGION.

THERE is no single subject so much dwelt upon by Swedenborg, none whose supreme importance he so often or so strongly emphasizes, as *righteousness of life.* Throughout his writings he teaches that love to the Lord and the neighbor is the essential thing in heaven and the church; that the degree of heavenly life, and consequent happiness, in any individual, depends on the degree in which this love is developed or received (for man, he tells us, is only a *recipient* subject), and the measure of its intensity. He says that love is life; and that the purer, stronger and more disinterested the love, the nobler and more exalted the life — the nearer does the individual approach to the moral likeness of God Himself, and the sweeter and more abundant his spiritual joy. Accordingly he teaches that this is the great end of all God's dealings with us — the end of all his chastisements and blessings — the end for which He gives us spiritual truths or the laws of the soul's higher life — viz., to develop within us a heavenly character — a pure and unselfish love, — to re-create us in his own image and likeness. He insists, indeed, on the importance of truth, but only as a *means* to this great end; and the higher and purer

the truth we accept, the higher and more blessed the state of life to which we may attain — *shall* attain if we religiously obey the truth. But religious truth, he says — no matter how pure, exalted, or abundant it be — is of no advantage whatever to the receiver, unless he make it the means of repressing and overcoming in himself his selfish and infernal propensities and developing the higher and nobler life; and this he does only by faithfully *living* or *doing* the truth — following whithersoever it points the way, and shunning, as a sin against God, whatever the truth, as he understands it, condemns. Hundreds of passages confirmatory of this might be quoted; but three or four brief extracts will serve our purpose. Bear in mind that every one's *character* is according to the state of his heart or will, the nature of his dominant love, or the ruling purpose of his life.

"Charity constitutes the church, and not faith separate from charity." (A. C., n. 3121. See also n. 809, 916, 1798, 1799, 1834, 1844, 2190, 2228, 2442.) And "Genuine charity is to believe in the Lord, and to act justly and rightly in every employment and office. That man, therefore, who from the Lord loves justice and practices it with judgment, is charity in its image and likeness." (T. C. R., n. 459.)

"Every man's character is known from his [dominant] love; for love is the *esse* of every one's life, the veriest life itself deriving its existence from it. Such, therefore, as is the nature of the love which

rules in a man, such is the man. If it be the love of self and the world, and consequently of revenge, hatred, cruelty, adultery and the like, the man as to his spirit or the interior man that lives after death, is a devil, whatever be his outward appearance. But if his prevailing love be the love of God and the neighbor, and consequently the love of goodness and truth, also of justice and honesty, he, whatever may be his outward appearance, is an angel as to his spirit that lives after death." (A. C., n. 6872. See also n. 379, 33, 10,284. Ap. Ex., n. 251.)

"The state of charity in man is according to the nature and amount of truth in him. . . Nevertheless, life is not in *truth* but in *good*. Truth is only a recipient of life, that is, of good. It is, as it were, the clothing or vestment of good. Therefore truths in the Word are called clothes, and also garments." (A. C., n. 2189.)

"It is of no advantage to a man to know much, unless he *lives according to what he knows*. For knowledge has no other end than goodness; and he who is made good [that is, pure and unselfish in his character] is in possession of a far richer treasure than he whose knowledge is the most extensive, and yet is destitute of goodness; for what the latter is seeking by his great acquirements, the former already possesses. . . They who know little, but have a conscience [or follow the little light they have], become enlightened in the other world even so as to become

angels; and then their wisdom and intelligence are inexpressible." (A. C., n. 1100.)

"Truths, however they are known and understood, if they are not at the same time *lived*, are nothing but inanimate truths; and inanimate truths are, as it were, lifeless statues." (Ap. Ex., n. 730.)

So that a man's character or his spiritual nearness to God, depends not so much on what he understands, thinks or *believes*, as on the kind and degree of his love, the state of his heart or *the ruling purpose of his life;* and this, again, depends on the measure of his fidelity to duty, or the degree of his obedience to all known truth.

So often is the supreme importance of *right living*, or *religious obedience to all known laws of heavenly charity*, insisted on by Swedenborg, and the relative insignificance of everything else, that it would be easy to fill a clever-sized volume with passages illustrative of this.

And are not the writings of Channing imbued throughout with the very same teaching? Does he not in hundreds of places lay the strong emphasis on *character* rather than on mere doctrine or belief? Does he not insist on the superiority of charity to faith as earnestly as did Swedenborg seventy years before? And that the formation of heavenly character by the faithful application of truth to life, is the grand desideratum—the chief purpose of the Christian

religion — the end which the Heavenly Father Himself is perpetually seeking and would have all his children seek? Hear him: —

"This idea, that the great end of Christianity, of the mission of Jesus, is to exalt the human character although it runs through the Scriptures, has been very much overlooked. . . The Scriptures, I think, lead us to believe that holiness, or excellence of character, is a vastly greater blessing than pardon or forgiveness. . . The great principle which runs through and binds together all parts of the Christian system, is this, — that our happiness, our eternal happiness, depends on the character we form." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 49, 50.)

"Inward sanctity, pure love, disinterested attachment to God and man, obedience of heart and life, sincere excellence of character, this is the one thing needful, this the essential thing in religion; and all things else, ministers, churches, ordinances, places of worship, all are but means, helps, secondary influences, and utterly worthless when separated from this. . . My friends, one of the greatest truths of religion, is the supreme importance of character, of virtue, of that divine spirit which shone out in Christ." (*Works*, Vol. VI., pp. 223, '4.)

"God heeds not what we say, but what we *are*. The subjection of our wills to the Divine, the mortification of sensual and selfish propensities, the cultivation of supreme love to God and of universal

justice and charity towards our neighbor,—this, this is the very essence of religion; this alone places us on a rock; this is the end, the supreme and ultimate good, and is to be prized and sought above all other things.

"Men in all ages have contrived to find substitutes for purity of heart and life; have hoped by some other means to commend themselves to God, to enter the kingdom of heaven. Forms, creeds, churches, the priesthood, the sacraments, these and other things have been exalted into supremacy. The grand and only qualification for heaven, that which in itself *is* heaven, the virtue and the spirit of Jesus Christ, has been obscured, depreciated; whilst assent to certain mysteries, or union with certain churches, has been thought the narrow way that leads to life.

"So that something distinct from purity of heart and life, is made the way of salvation.

"This error I would expose. I wish to show that Christ's spirit, Christ's virtue, or the doing of the Sermon on the Mount, is the great end of our religion, the only essential thing, and that all other things are important only as ministering to this." (Ibid., pp. 186, '7. See also p. 194.)

"I consider righteous action, the DOING OF GOD'S WILL, as the *beginning and end* of Christianity. I regard the precepts of Jesus — which He gave on the Mount, and which He illustrated so gloriously in his life,—as the essential Element of his religion, and to which all other parts are but subservient.

Obey these, and the purpose of his religion is fulfilled in you. Regard these as your Rule of Life, and you build your house upon a rock. Live them out indeed, and you have entered the Kingdom of Heaven — you even now enter it." (*The Perfect Life*, p. 272, also p. 265.)

X.

CATHOLICITY.

SWEDENBORG was no sectarian. No man was ever freer than he from everything like bigotry, narrowness, intolerance or exclusiveness. His writings are pervaded by a large, generous and catholic spirit which is truly refreshing. He teaches that not heresies of the head but heresies of the heart or evils of life are the things which alone shut us out of the Kingdom; and that men may differ widely in their doctrinal beliefs, and yet be closely united in the great and ruling purpose of their lives, — may be one in the bonds of charity, and all members therefore of the one true church.

"In the spiritual world," he says, "to which every man goes after death, it is not the character of your faith into which inquiry is made, nor of your doctrine, but *of your life*, whether it had been of this character or that." (D. P., n. 101.)

"Let this truth be received as a principle that love to the Lord and charity towards our neighbor are the essentials of all doctrine and all worship, . . . then, every one would say of another, in whatsoever doctrine or in whatsoever external worship he might be principled, This is my brother: I see that he worships the Lord, and that he is a good man." (A. C., n. 2385.)

"It is very common for those who have conceived an opinion respecting any truth of faith, to conclude that others cannot be saved except by believing as they do; which, nevertheless, the Lord forbids, Matt. vii. 1, 2. Accordingly it has been made known to me by much experience, that persons of every religion are saved, if, by a life of charity, they have received remains of good and of apparent truth. The life of charity consists in a man's desiring and seeking the good of others, and perceiving joy in himself at their salvation." (A. C., n. 2284. And scores of similar extracts might be made.)

How similar to this are many passages that we meet with in the writings of Channing! This, indeed, is the general spirit and drift of all his teaching. We cannot find in his writings a single paragraph in conflict with it. Speaking of "the peculiarly close and tender unions which necessarily subsist among all the enlightened and sincere disci-

ples of such a religion as Christ's," no matter what their distinguishing name or creed — "a religion," he says, "whose soul, essence, and breath of life is love," he continues: —

"Has not Paul taught us that there is but one perfect bond, Love (Col. iii. 14)? Has not Christ taught us that the seal set on his disciples by which all men are to know them, is Love (John xiii. 35)? Is not this the badge of the true church, the life of the true body of Christ? And is not every disciple, of every name and form, who is inspired with this, embraced indissolubly in the Christian union?" (*Works*, Vol. VI., p. 213.)

Again in the same discourse: —

"We must shun the spirit of sectarianism as from hell. We must shudder at the thought of shutting up God in any denomination. We must think no man the better for belonging to our communion; no man the worse for belonging to another. We must look with undiminished joy on goodness, though it shine forth from the most adverse sect. . . To confine God's love or his good Spirit to any party, sect, or name, is to sin against the fundamental law of the Kingdom of God." (Ibid., p. 211.)

"One of the greatest wrongs to Christ is, to despise his character, his virtue, in a disciple who happens to wear a different name from our own. . . Think no man the better, no man the worse, for the church he belongs to. Try him by his fruits. Ex-

pel from your breasts the demon of sectarianism, narrowness, bigotry, intolerance. This is not, as we are apt to think, a slight sin. It is a denial of the supremacy of goodness. It sets up something, whether a form or dogma, above the virtue of the heart and life. Sectarianism immures itself in its particular church as in a dungeon, and is there cut off from the free air, the cheerful light, the goodly prospects, the celestial beauty of the church universal." (Ibid., pp. 224, '5.)

And often elsewhere in his writings we meet with the same catholic sentiments.

XI.

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL.

SWEDENBORG says that the real church, which consists essentially in good and truth, or in charity and faith, "is *in* man and not *out of* him;" that it is the same with the church as it is with heaven and with hell, neither of which "can be said to be *without* one but *within* him." Hence "every man in whom the Lord is present in the good of love and faith, is a church" in the smallest form; and "the church in general consists of the men in whom the church is." And some of these, he says, are to be found not only in the various Christian

denominations, but outside of them all — in countries that know nothing about Christianity. For the Lord has provided that there shall be some religion among all people, "and that in every religion there be these two essentials, the acknowledgment of a God and the shunning of evil as sin."

"Hence it is evident," he says, "that the Lord's church is not here nor there, but everywhere, as well without as within those kingdoms where the church [in possession of the Word] is, where the life is formed according to the precepts of charity. Therefore the Lord's church is spread throughout the whole world; and yet it is one." (A. C., n. 8152.)

Precisely the same idea is found in many parts of Channing's works. He held and taught that both heaven and hell are states of life, and as such exist necessarily *within* men; that they are opposite states — as opposite as light and darkness, good and evil. "Heaven and hell have their seat in the soul," is one of his expressions. And as heaven is within, and consists of a certain spiritual nearness or likeness to Jesus Christ, so likewise the church. "There is," he says, "a far higher likeness to Christ than the artist ever drew or chiseled. It exists in the heart of his true disciple." And accordingly he adds: "The truest church is that which has in the highest degree this spiritual presence of our Lord, this revelation of Jesus *in* his followers." And while

holding to the importance and need of "particular churches organized according to some particular forms," he believed with Swedenborg in a still more comprehensive church — a church universal.

"There is a grander church than all particular ones, however extensive; the church Catholic or Universal, spread over all lands, and one with the church in heaven. . . Into this church all who partake the spirit of Christ are admitted. . . The word Catholic means Universal. Would to God that the church which has usurped the name had understood the reality! Still, Romanism has done something to give to its members the idea of their connection with that vast spiritual company or church which has existed in all times and spread over all lands." (*Works*, Vol. VI., pp. 203–'6.)

XII.

VARIETY IN THE CHURCH.

BOTH these writers saw also that unity in the church does not mean uniformity, or perfect agreement in doctrine or ritual. Both saw that God delights in variety; that diversity is stamped on all his works; and that diversity in forms of religious faith and outward worship, is therefore as truly a thing of divine order and as compatible with complete unity, as diversity in the landscape or in

the forms and functions of the organs composing the human body; and that the unity of the church and of heaven is all the more perfect on account of the variety that belongs to each. Thus Swedenborg says: —

"Oneness in heaven is constituted of several various things, so arranged by the Lord as to be in harmony with each other. . . The case herein is like that of the organs, members and viscera of the body, no one of which is altogether like another, but all are various; and yet they make one in consequence of their all having relation to one soul, and thereby to heaven, and thus to the Lord." (A. C., n. 3241.) "The same may be said concerning the church as concerning heaven; for the church is the Lord's heaven on earth." (H. H., n. 57.)

"Mutual love and charity are effective of unity or oneness even among varieties. For let numbers be multiplied ever so many times, even to thousands and tens of thousands, if all are principled in charity or mutual love, they all have one end, viz., the common good, the kingdom of the Lord and the Lord Himself. In which case the varieties in matters of doctrine and worship are like the varieties of the senses and viscera in man, which contribute to the perfection of the whole." (A. C., n. 1285.)

And in Channing we meet with substantially the same kind of teaching.

"We have grown up under different influences. We bear different names. But if we purpose solemnly to do God's will, and are following the precepts and example of Christ, we are one church, and let nothing divide us. Diversities of opinion may incline us to worship under different roofs; or diversities of tastes or habit, to worship with different forms. But these varieties are not schisms; they do not break the unity of Christ's church. We may still honor and love and rejoice in one another's spiritual life and progress as truly as if we were cast into one and the same unyielding form. God loves variety in nature and in the human soul; nor does He reject it in Christian worship." (*Works*, Vol. VI., pp. 225, '6.)

XIII.

THE TRUE WORSHIP.

AT the time Swedenborg wrote, formal worship — praying on bended knees in the temple or the closet — was the only kind of worship that Christians thought of. But he tells us of another and higher kind — a worship which consists in the conscientious and faithful performance of each one's daily duties, and for which it is the chief end of oral or formal worship to fit and prepare us. And this higher kind of worship, he says, is what is meant by

the worship of the Father "in spirit and in truth;" a worship offered at all times and in all places where the voice of duty is reverently heeded — where sorrow and suffering are patiently borne, loving service faithfully rendered, and useful work of any kind honestly done.

"By the worship of God at this day," he says, "is meant principally the worship of the mouth in a temple morning and evening. But the worship of God does not consist essentially in this, but in a life of uses." (A. C., n. 7884.)

"He who thinks that the worship of the Lord consists solely in frequenting the temple, hearing preaching there, and praying, and that this is enough, is much deceived. The real worship of the Lord consists in the performance of uses; and uses consist, during a man's life in the world, in the faithful discharge of every one's duty in his particular vocation; that is, in serving his country, society and his neighbor from the heart, in acting with sincerity in all his relations, and in performing duties prudently according to the nature of each. These uses are in the highest degree the exercises of charity, and those whereby the Lord is principally worshiped. Frequenting the temple, listening to sermons, and saying prayers are also necessary; but without uses, they are of no avail, for they are not of the life, but teach what the quality of the life should be. The angels in heaven have all their happiness from

uses and according to uses; for to them uses are heaven — happiness, in the Divine economy, being always according to uses." (A. C., n. 7038.)

And Channing: —

"From the peculiar character of the worship to which this house [the church edifice at Newport, R. I.] is consecrated, you learn the *kind* of worship which you should carry from it into your common lives. . . Mercy, love, is more acceptable worship to God than all sacrifices or outward offerings. . . Be such the worship which you shall carry from this place. Go forth to do good with every power which God bestows, to make every place you enter happier by your presence, to espouse all human interests, to throw your whole weight into the scale of human freedom and improvement, to withstand all wrong, to uphold all right, and especially to give light, life, strength to the immortal soul." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 335.) In other words, faithfully perform the highest *uses* you are capable of, in humble acknowledgment of the Lord as the source of your ability and disposition — this was Channing's idea of the highest kind of worship. And precisely this was the idea of the Swedish sage.

Again: —

"To do the Will of our Heavenly Father, — to form ourselves after the purest Ideal of Goodness, which Nature, Conscience, Revelation present as a

pattern, — is the great work of earthly existence. This practical use of the Gospel is the only saving Faith in Jesus Christ. For we know Him and believe in Him only so far as we recognize, love and imitate the Perfection of his Character and Life. To prefer Universal Rectitude, the boundless Love of God and fellow beings, the PERFECT LOVE, before all other good, is the only true wisdom, is the only real worship." (*The Perfect Life*, p. 283.)

XIV.

GOD'S END IN CREATION.

SWEDENBORG says that the supreme or final end in the creation of the universe was, "a heaven of angels from the human race;" — a countless host of immortal beings, capable of receiving an ever-increasing measure of the Creator's own intelligence and benevolence — of being made unspeakably happy in the reception and exercise of his own wisdom and love. And we can conceive of no higher or nobler end than this — of none more worthy a Being of Infinite Benevolence.

"By long-continued intercourse with angels and spirits," says the great seer, "it has been made known and proved to me, that heaven does not consist of any angels created such at the begin-

ning; and that hell is not from any devil created an angel of light and cast out of heaven; but that both are from the human race,—heaven from those who are in the love of the good and the consequent understanding of the true, and hell from those who are in the love of evil and the consequent understanding of the false. . . Now as heaven is from the human race, and is an eternal abode with the Lord, it must have been the Lord's end in creation, and therefore the end of the Divine Providence itself. The Lord did not create the universe for the sake of Himself, but for those with whom He is to dwell in heaven; for spiritual love is of such a nature that it wishes to impart its own to another, and so far as it can do this, it is in its *esse*, its peace and its beatitude. This nature it derives from the Lord's Divine Love which is such infinitely. Hence the end of the Divine Love, and consequently of the Divine Providence, is a heaven which shall consist of men who have become or are becoming angels, to whom the Lord can impart all the blessedness and happiness of love and wisdom, and this, moreover, from Himself resident within them; — . . . Himself in them being love united to wisdom and wisdom united to love, or what is the same, the good united to the true and the true to the good." (D. P., n. 27.)

And this indwelling of the Lord's own life in the souls He has created, through their own free and

voluntary reception thereof, and their equally free rejection of the selfish or opposite kind of life, is what constitutes the sum of human excellence, the perfection of human character, the height of human bliss, the essence of heaven and of the church in man.

"The Lord's heaven in the natural world is called the church; and an angel of this heaven is a man of the church who is conjoined to the Lord, and who also becomes an angel of the spiritual heaven after his departure from the world. Obviously, therefore, what has been said of the angelic heaven, must be understood of the human heaven which is called the church." (D. P., 30.)

And the very same thought, though differently expressed, is often met with in the works of Channing. Thus he says: "The design of the Heavenly Father in the whole creation," is "to train up his spiritual children to immortal goodness;" that all his laws are "a welcome summons to universal, disinterested love"—"a love which in itself is joy." "His great end," he continues, "is to unite all beings by universal justice and love,—to bring all spirits into harmony by moral bonds,—to reconcile all that is partial, narrow, selfish, separate,—to make all spirits one by love." (*Memoirs*, Vol. III., p. 406.) And when this end is attained, there exists a heaven of angels from the human race.

Again: Speaking of the central principle and purpose of Christianity, — which, when we have fully grasped we have comprehended God's great end in creation, — he says: —

"I believe that Christianity has ONE GREAT PRINCIPLE which is *central*, around which all its truths gather, and which constitutes it the Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God. . . This great Principle can be briefly expressed. It is the doctrine, that God purposes, in his unbounded Fatherly Love, to PERFECT THE HUMAN SOUL; to purify it from all sin; to create it after his own image; to fill it with his own spirit; to unfold it forever; to raise it to Life and Immortality in Heaven; — that is, to communicate to it from Himself a Life of Celestial Power, Virtue, Joy. The elevation of men above the imperfections, temptations, sins, sufferings, of the present state, to a diviner being, — [and what is this but the formation of a heaven of angels?] this is the great purpose of God, revealed and accomplished by Jesus Christ. . .

"In the New Testament I learn, that what God wills is our PERFECTION; by which I understand the freest exercise and perpetual development of our highest powers — strength and brightness of intellect, unconquerable energy of moral purpose, pure and fervent desire for truth, unbounded love of goodness and greatness, benevolence free from every selfish taint, the perpetual consciousness of God and of his immediate Presence, co-operation and friend-

ship with all enlightened and disinterested spirits, and radiant glory of benign will and beneficent influence, of which we have an emblem — a faint emblem only — in the Sun that illuminates and warms so many worlds. Christianity reveals to me this Moral Perfection of man, as the great purpose of God." (*The Perfect Life*, pp. 245, '6.)

And this, again, is the very same as saying what Swedenborg has said many times, that "God's end in the creation of the universe, was a heaven of angels from the human race."

XV.

THE RESURRECTION.

SWEDENBORG says that the spirit or soul of man is the real man; that it is in the human form, and composed of spiritual substance which is the only real and enduring substance; that it is endowed with senses far more acute than those of the body; and that, when the body dies, the spirit is released from all connection with it, and enters consciously upon another stage of existence in a congenial realm where all things are spiritual — its character or dominant affections remaining unchanged. This separation of the real man from his outer "vesture of decay," and his conscious entrance into the

spiritual world, is what is meant, he says, by the resurrection. The body that is cast off returns to its original dust, and will never again be needed, and of course will never be resumed. And all this he learned (if we may take his word for it) by long and open intercourse with the spirits of the departed, many of whom he had known in the flesh. To quote a single passage: —

"The internal of man is the spirit, and the external is the body. The external or body is suited to the performance of uses in the natural world, and is rejected or laid aside at death; but the internal called the spirit, and which is suited to the performance of uses in the spiritual world, never dies. This internal, after death, exists as a good spirit or angel if the man had been good during his abode in the world; but if he had lived in evil during that time, he is an evil spirit after death.

"After the dissolution of the body, a man's spirit appears in the spiritual world in the human form altogether as in the natural world. He enjoys the faculty of seeing, hearing, speaking and feeling as he did in the world; and he is endowed with every power of thought, will and action as when he was in the world. In a word, he is a man in every respect even to the smallest particular, except that he is not encompassed with the gross body which he had in the world. He leaves this when he dies, nor does he ever resume it. This continuation of

life is what is meant by the Resurrection." (N. J. D., n. 224, '5.)

And precisely this seems to have been Channing's idea of the nature of the resurrection—an idea formed, however, in a manner quite different from that claimed by the illustrious Swede.

"We shall be the same beings in heaven," he says, "as on earth. We shall retain our present faculties, our present affections. . . We shall probably, too, have bodies [spiritual, of course, as we shall then inhabit a spiritual realm—and in the human form]—the eye to behold creation and receive its beauties, the ear to hear the voice of friendship and to receive the pleasures of harmony, and every sense refined and purified. . . When Moses and Elijah conversed with Jesus on the Mount, they appeared in the human form, differing from ours only in its splendor." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 22. *See also his sermon on "Immortality," "The Future Life," and "The Evil of Sin,"* Vol. IV., *Works.*)

XVI.

CHARITY, OR LOVE OF THE NEIGHBOR.

IN nearly all great reformers we discover some lack of moderation, some tendency towards extravagance or excess, some tinge of fanaticism. Their zeal for a principle, in itself true and right, is apt to lead them to overlook times and circumstances and moral conditions, and every other consideration in the application of that principle.

For example, there have been men so impressed by the horrors of war and so imbued with the love of peace, that they have adopted the principle of non-resistance, as the only true, safe or Christian principle; — believing that the Lord's words, "I say unto you that ye resist not evil," are to be literally obeyed by all his followers and under all circumstances.

But Swedenborg was as remarkable for his freedom from everything like fanaticism as from everything like license. He teaches that to expose, resist and punish evil-doers, whether their offences be against the church, the state, the community, or ourselves individually, is the truest exercise of charity — is best for the offenders themselves as well as for all others. Thus, on the subject of neighborly love or charity, and how it is to be exercised towards different classes of persons, he says: —

"To love the neighbor is not only to wish well and do good to a relation, a friend and a good man, but also to a stranger, an enemy and a wicked man. But charity is to be exercised towards the latter in one way, towards the former in another; towards a relation and friend by direct benefits; towards an enemy and a wicked man by indirect benefits which are conferred by exhortation, discipline, punishment, and his consequent amendment. This may be illustrated thus: —

"A judge who by law and justice punishes an evil-doer, loves his neighbor; for so he makes him better, and consults the welfare of the citizens that he may not do them harm. Every one knows that a father who punishes his children when they do wrong, loves them; and that, on the other hand, he who does not punish them therefor, loves their evils, and this cannot be called charity. Again, if a man repels an insulting enemy, and in self-defence strikes him, or delivers him to the judge so as to prevent injury to himself, with a disposition, nevertheless, to befriend the man, he acts from a principle of charity. Wars, the object of which is to defend the country and the church, are not contrary to charity. The end in view declares whether it is charity or not." (T. C. R., n. 407.)

And a similar freedom from everything like excess, extravagance and fanaticism, is to be met with

everywhere in Channing's writings; always good, sober, common sense. And on the subject here introduced for illustration, his teaching is identical with that of Swedenborg. Thus, in his letter to Miss Roscoe, of Liverpool, who had asked his opinion of her book on the "Unlawfulness of War," a copy of which she had sent him, he says, with his characteristic frankness: —

"I think the author has erred fundamentally in supposing that we have nothing to do but to obey the laws of Christianity without reasoning about them, or that our religion prescribes particular acts or courses which we are to follow without a thought of consequences. . . The laws of Christianity enjoin a spirit or inward principle, leaving us very much to our own discretion as to the mode of applying it. The precept 'Resist not evil,' is plainly to be understood with much limitation; for, were it literally followed, without exception, by the private individual and magistrate, all government, domestic and civil, would cease, and society would fall a prey to its worst members. The precept was not intended to forbid all resistance, but to forbid the *bad passions* from which resistance generally springs. . . Christianity is intended to raise us to universal, unbounded love, and the only question is, whether war is inconsistent with this spirit. You may say it is. You may ask, How can I turn

against one whom I sincerely love, instruments of death?

"I answer, It is very possible to possess a sincere regard for the happiness of another being, sympathize strongly with his sufferings, and yet to subject him to severe suffering, and even to death. How often does a judge pass sentence on a criminal for whom he feels deeply! I am to love bad men; but I am also to love society, to love my family, my friends, my country; and if the bad man arm himself for the ruin of these, I am bound to repel him. In so doing, do I not act from a principle of charity, especially if to save the good, to defend the community, I expose my own life in resisting the bad? I can certainly oppose a wicked man's purposes, and in so doing can inflict on him severe pain, without hating him, and even with the deepest grief for his character and punishment. I may even feel, through the strength of my philanthropy, a severer pain than I inflict. War, then, is not necessarily inconsistent with the spirit of Christian love." (*Memoirs*, Vol. III., p. 19.)

XVII.

SALVATION FOR THE HEATHEN.

UP to the time when Swedenborg wrote, it was a part of the creed of Christendom that salvation for any but Christians was wholly out of the question;—that all in heathen lands, therefore, unless converted to the Christian religion, must perish everlastingly. This belief was one of the legitimate offspring of the generally received doctrines of a vicarious atonement and salvation by faith alone. For these doctrines, and even the particular form in which they were held, being regarded as absolutely *essential to salvation*, the damnation of all unconverted heathen followed as a logical and necessary conclusion. For how could people believe in a vicarious atonement, who never heard of a crucified Redeemer? Yet, for not believing in that of which they never heard, millions of human beings (so Christians have held and taught) must be shut out of the kingdom of heaven, and suffer the torments of the damned forever!

The human imagination cannot conceive of a more unreasonable or revolting doctrine than this, or one more derogatory to the character of the Heavenly Father. Every one who allows himself to think apart from his creed, or who consults the

feelings and intuitions of his better nature, knows that such a doctrine cannot be true; for if true, it would stamp the supreme Ruler of the universe as the most abominable of tyrants. The Sacred Scripture, enlightened reason, our sense of justice, and every tender and humane sentiment, are alike opposed to a doctrine so revolting.

And these same witnesses further concur in teaching, that He who is Love itself and Wisdom itself could not create beings capable of blissful conjunction with Himself, and then leave them without the means or possibility of attaining to that conjunction. Such a thing would be against his very nature. The benevolence of his character is a sure and perpetual guarantee that He will leave none of his intelligent creatures without the means of salvation. There must be, therefore, in every nation and for every people endowed with a spiritual and immortal nature, some form of religion and worship, and some truths which, if religiously obeyed, will surely bind the creature to the Creator, and save him from sinking into the realms of darkness. And a complete history of the various religions on our earth, or a full account of their doctrinal teachings, would show that such is actually the case; for some vital truths — some simple precepts inculcating a life of charity — would be found interwoven among them all. And obedience to these truths must, therefore, develop some degree of heavenly life in the

receiver, and consequently save him in that degree.

Now, what had Swedenborg to say on this subject? What should he have said if he spoke with a divine authority, or wrote under any thing like the degree of illumination he professed? What, but the very thing he did say — and often repeated?

"It is a common opinion," he says, "that those who are born out of the church, who are called Heathen or Gentiles, cannot be saved, because they have not the Word and are therefore ignorant of the Lord, without whom there can be no salvation. Nevertheless it may be known that they also are saved, from these considerations alone: That the mercy of the Lord is universal, that is, extended towards every individual; that they are born men as well as those within the church, who are comparatively few; and that it is no fault of theirs that they are ignorant of the Lord.

"Every person who thinks from enlightened reason, may see that no man is born for hell; for the Lord is love itself, and it is agreeable to his love that all be saved. Therefore also He has provided that all shall have some kind of religion, and thereby be in the acknowledgment of a Divine, and in the enjoyment of interior life." (H. H., n. 318.)

"That Gentiles are saved as well as Christians, may be known to those who understand what it is that makes heaven in man. For heaven is in man;

and those who have heaven in themselves enter heaven after death." (Ibid., 319.)

"It is provided by the Lord that those whom the Gospel cannot reach, but yet some religion, may likewise have a place in heaven, . . . and that they may live in heavenly joy as well as others. It matters not whether a person be in such joy as is experienced by the angels of the highest or the lowest heaven, since every one who is received into heaven, enters into the supreme or full joy of his heart." (D. P., 254.)

And Channing held and taught precisely the same doctrine. How, indeed, could we expect a man of his mental freedom and independence, enlightened reason and profound spiritual insight, to believe or teach any other?

"Christianity," he says, "would furnish a weapon against itself not easily repelled, should it claim the distinction of being the only light vouchsafed by God to men; for, in that case, it would represent a vast majority of the human race as left by their Creator without guidance or hope. I believe, and rejoice to believe, that a ray from Heaven descends on the path of every fellow-creature. The heathen, though in darkness when compared with the Christian, has still his light; and it comes from the same source as our own, just as the same sun dispenses, now the faint dawn and now the perfect day." (*Works*, Vol. IV, p. 44.)

Again, — and still more full and explicit, — in "The Perfect Life:"

"This doctrine of God's love to his heathen offspring is one which we Christians still need to learn. For we, too, are apt, like the Jew, to exalt ourselves above our less favored brethren. It is the doctrine of the mass of Christians even now, that the heathen are the objects of God's wrath. All who live and die beyond the sound of the Gospel, it is thought, are doomed to endless perdition. On this ground indeed it is, that most missionary enterprises rest. We are called upon to send the Gospel where it is not preached, because men conceive that beyond the borders of Christendom God is an implacable Judge; because no other parts of the earth are believed to hold communication with Heaven. . . But how can a sane man credit, for an instant, that the vastly greater portion of the human race is abandoned by God? If Christianity did actually thus represent the character of God, we might well ask what right we have to hold or to diffuse such a religion. For among all the false gods of Heathenism, can one be found more unrighteous and more cruel than the Deity whom such a system offers as an object for our worship? But the Christian Religion nowhere teaches this horrible faith. And still more, no man in his heart does or can believe such an appalling doctrine. Utter it in words, men may; but human nature forbids them to give it inward assent." (Pp. 65, '6.)

XVIII.

THE TRUE FREEDOM.

THERE are many kinds of freedom which it is important to distinguish. There is natural freedom and spiritual freedom; freedom of the body and freedom of the soul; civil freedom and religious freedom; intellectual freedom and moral freedom; the freedom of heaven and the freedom of hell. But there is only one kind of genuine spiritual freedom; and this is freedom from the domination of passion, appetite, hatred, love of self, love of the world, lust of dominion — all the selfish and evil proclivities of the unregenerate heart; a complete mastery over all the lower propensities of our nature, and a positive delight in the free and healthy exercise of all our higher and nobler faculties. In other words, true freedom is to yield ourselves willingly and joyfully to the prompting influences of heaven; to be led and governed, in all our feelings, purposes and conduct, by the Lord and his angels, and not by self or the spirits that are imbued and swayed by the love of self. The true freedom, therefore, differs from the spurious or false, as hatred differs from love, good from evil, heaven from hell. Accordingly Swedenborg says: —

"All that is called freedom which pertains to the

will or love. Hence it is that freedom manifests itself by the delight of willing and thinking, and thence of doing and speaking; for all delight is of love, and all love is of the will. To do evil from the delight of love *appears* like freedom, but it is slavery because it is from hell. To do good from the delight of love, appears like freedom and also *is* freedom because it is from the Lord. Slavery, therefore, consists in being led of hell, and freedom in being led of the Lord." (A. C., n. 9586.)

"The freedom of self-love and the love of the world and of the lusts thereof, is quite another thing than freedom, being altogether slavery; but still it is called freedom, just as love, affection and delight are called by these names, whether used in a good or bad sense. Nevertheless self-love and the love of the world are totally different from love, being in reality hatred." (A. C., n. 2884.)

"There is heavenly freedom and infernal freedom. Heavenly freedom consists in being led of the Lord; and this freedom is the love of good and truth. But infernal freedom consists in being led of the devil; and this freedom is the love of evil and falsity. They who are in infernal freedom believe there is slavery and compulsion in not being allowed to do evil and think falsity at pleasure; but they who are in heavenly freedom dread to do evil and think what is false, and are tormented if they are compelled to." (A. C., n. 9589, '90.)

And Channing's idea of the true freedom, though differently expressed, does not differ at all in substance from Swedenborg's. In his masterly discourse on "Spiritual Freedom," preached at the "Annual Election" in 1830, we find ample confirmation of this. After premising that spiritual freedom is "not a negative state" — is something more than "mere absence of sin," he proceeds: —

"He only is free, who, through self-conflict and moral resolution, sustained by trust in God, subdues the passions which have debased him, and, escaping the thraldom of low objects, binds himself to pure and lofty ones. That mind alone is free, which, looking to God as the inspirer and rewarder of virtue, adopts his law, written on the heart and in his Word, as its supreme rule, and which, in obedience to this, governs itself, reveres itself, exerts faithfully its best powers, and unfolds itself by well-doing in whatever sphere God's providence assigns.

"I call that mind free, which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, . . . which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no man master, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, . . . which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, . . . which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger and sloth, and

offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind, . . . which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong-doing." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 71, '2, '3.)

And the mind that is in this state, is in a state of cheerful submission to the will of the Lord, anxious to be led by Him and not by self — anxious ever to know and do his will. And this, Swedenborg tells us, is a state of true and heavenly freedom.

XIX.

THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT.

THE written Scripture, like the volume of nature, abounds in mere *appearances* of truth, which are very different from the real truths that underlie these appearances, and which require for their discernment the faithful exercise of all our best faculties. The most unreasonable and absurd doctrines find some support from the letter of Scripture interpreted without the light of reason, or as the natural man is ever inclined to interpret it. All the numerous errors and corruptions that have crept into the church, have sprung from a too literal interpretation of Scripture, or from neglecting to exercise reason and judgment, and so failing to discover its spirit — or the deeper meaning which is wrapped up in

the letter. Accordingly Swedenborg—after telling us that there is a correspondence between natural and spiritual things like that between the body and the soul, and that the Sacred Scripture contains a spiritual as well as a natural sense throughout, which cannot be discerned without the exercise of the rational understanding — says: —

"Now since the Word [or Sacred Scripture] is of such a nature, the appearances of truth, which are truths clothed, *may* be taken for naked truths; and such appearances when confirmed, become falsities. Yet this is done by those who believe themselves to be superior to others in wisdom, when yet they are not wise; for wisdom consists in seeing whether a thing be true before it is confirmed, but not in confirming whatever one pleases. . . The former is the case with those who love truths, and are affected by them because they are truths, and who apply them to the purposes of life. Such persons are enlightened of the Lord, and see truths by the light of truth. [That is, they exercise the mental faculties with which God has endowed them, and refuse to accept or confirm themselves in any thing which does not approve itself to their rational intuitions; and so, desiring truth for the purpose of living better lives, their understanding is enlightened, and they discern the true spirit of Scripture — a meaning that is rational and useful, but quite dif-

ferent from that conveyed by the bare cortex of the letter."] (D. S. S., n. 91.)

"All the heresies which ever did or do still exist in Christendom, have sprung from this circumstance: that men have taken appearances of truth [such as are found in the letter of the Word] for genuine truths, and as such have confirmed them. . . And when a man has confirmed himself in what is false, it is as if he had sworn to maintain it; especially if self-love or the pride of his own understanding be engaged in its favor." (Ibid., n. 92.)

It is known to all who read the Bible, that the dispositions, feelings and passions of unregenerate men, are not unfrequently attributed to God in the letter of Scripture. He is said to be angry, jealous and revengeful; to hate, punish, tempt and cast into hell. And such is the *apparent*, but not the real truth. The real truth is quite the reverse of this appearance. It is that God is love, mercy and forgiveness, and that He cannot hate or punish any one. The reason that He sometimes *appears* to be and to do so, is because of the anger, hatred, revenge, and the like, in unregenerate human hearts; for every one sees God from and according to his own state. To the supremely selfish heart, therefore, the Divine Being must needs appear the opposite of what He really is. The appearance is a true appearance, resulting from the opposite state in and from which He is viewed.

We have in the natural realm many such appearances of truth, which are very different from the truth itself. Yet we continue to speak according to the appearance, even after it is known that the language we employ does not express the real but only the apparent truth. For example, we say that the sun *rises* in the morning and *goes down* at evening. Yet we know that this is a fallacy, and that such language, literally interpreted, conveys an idea quite foreign to the real truth. Our reason, along with our knowledge of the solar system, enables us to correct this sensuous appearance, and to see that this apparent upward and downward movement of the sun is caused by our own, and not by the sun's motion — that is, by the diurnal revolution of the earth on its axis.

And the universe is full of such fallacious appearances, which are gradually dissipated as the knowledge of its laws increases. But this can be effected only through the faithful exercise of the reason that God has given us. And why should there not be the same fallacious appearances in the Word as in the works of God? — appearances that can only be dissipated by an increase of spiritual knowledge, or a better understanding of spiritual laws, which can be obtained only through the diligent and faithful exercise of our higher reason.

Channing saw this very clearly. He saw that our

reason and all the higher faculties of the soul should be brought into requisition when we read the written Scripture, else we shall be in continual danger of accepting the sensuous appearances of truth in the letter for the real truth itself, and so be led into many and great errors. His constant effort, therefore, was, to penetrate beneath the outer husk of Scripture, and get at its real kernel — its underlying spirit; ever confident that this, when reached, will be found in perfect accord with our highest reason as well as with our purest love. He insists not less earnestly than did Swedenborg on the necessity of going deeper than the letter, if we would find in Scripture a rational and consistent meaning; and on the importance, therefore, of constantly and faithfully exercising our reason and conscience in its interpretation. Accordingly we meet with such passages in his works as the following: —

"All sects of Christians agree, and are forced to agree, in frequently forsaking the literal sense on account of its incongruity with acknowledged truth. There is, in fact, no book in the world, which requires us more frequently to restrain unlimited expressions, to qualify the letter by the spirit [than the Bible.]" (*Works*, Vol. III., p. 19.)

"It may be said of the New as well as the Old Testament, that sometimes the letter killeth whilst the spirit giveth life. Almost any system may be built on the New Testament by a commentator who,

forgetting the general scope of Christianity, and the lessons of nature and experience, shall impose on every passage the literal signification which is first offered to the mind. The Christian minister, in his exposition of the Divine Word, should avail himself of the aids of learning and criticism, and also of the aids of reason and conscience." (Ibid., p. 20.)

"With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyond the *letter* to the *spirit*. . .

"Need I descend to particulars, to prove that the Scriptures demand the exercise of reason? Take, for example, the style in which they generally speak of God, and observe how habitually they apply to Him human passions and organs. Recollect the declarations of Christ, that He came not to send peace, but a sword; that unless we eat his flesh and drink his blood, we have no life in us; that we must hate father and mother, and pluck out the right eye." (Ibid., pp. 63, '4.)

And after affirming his belief that "God never contradicts in one part of Scripture what He teaches in another; and never contradicts in Revelation what He teaches in his Works and Providence," and that the true way to interpret any written document is to endeavor "to fix the precise import of its parts by inquiring into its general *spirit*," he concludes: —

"Without these principles of interpretation, we frankly acknowledge that we cannot defend the divine authority of the Scriptures. Deny us this latitude, and we must abandon this book to its enemies." (Ibid., p. 65.)

XX.

THE NEW AGE AND ITS INFLUENCE.

SWEDENBORG tells us that a great event which he was permitted to witness, transpired in "the World of Spirits," in 1757, which he calls the Last General Judgment, and of which I have already had occasion to speak. By means of this event, and as a consequence of it, he says, a new and improved order of things was established in that world, the clouds of obstructing error were dissipated, and a freer influx of heavenly light into all sincere and truth-seeking minds on earth was promoted. It was the consummation of the Old and the commencement of a New Christian Age — an Age which was to be characterized by new freedom in spiritual things, new light upon all subjects, new perceptions of truth and duty, and new and better motives of action. And while the old creeds and the old ecclesiastical forms would remain for some time unchanged, yet a new spirit, he tells us, would animate

them, causing the churches which profess the old dogmas, and outwardly appear about the same as they had previously been, to be quite different internally. The state of the Christian Church, as compared with what it had been, would be as morning and day compared with evening and night. (Contin. L. J., n. 13.) Thus, he says, near the close of his treatise on the Last Judgment: —

"The state of the church hereafter will be unlike what it has been heretofore. It will be similar, indeed, in the outward form, but *dis*similar in the inward. Churches will continue divided in outward appearance as heretofore; their doctrines will be taught as heretofore; and the same religions as now will exist among the Gentiles. But henceforth the man of the church will be in a more free state of thinking on matters of faith, that is, on spiritual things which relate to heaven, because spiritual liberty has been restored to him; . . . [so] that now, from restored liberty, he can, if he desires, more easily perceive interior truths, and thus be made more internal." (L. J., n. 73, '4.)

"After the Last Judgment was accomplished, there was joy in heaven, and such a degree of light also in the world of spirits as was not before. . . A similar light also then arose in men on earth, giving them new enlightenment." (Contin. L. J., n. 30.)

This was written more than a hundred years ago; — not as *prophecy*, but as the rational conclusion

of one who understood the connection between the two worlds, and could, therefore, clearly foresee the effect which the great change he had just witnessed in the world of spirits, must inevitably produce in the churches or the minds of men in the natural world.

And Channing, writing fifty years later, confirms by observation, and records *as a matter of history*, what Swedenborg had predicted many years before. Speaking of the gradual defection from the old dogmas of those who still professed the ancestral creeds, and of the steadily increasing light in our century, he says: —

"This silent but real defection from Calvinism is spreading more and more widely. The grim features of this system are softening, and its stern spirit yielding to conciliation and charity. We beg our readers to consult for themselves the two Catechisms and the Confession of the Westminster Assembly, and to compare these standards of Calvinism with what now bears its name. . . Calvinism has to contend with foes more formidable than theologians, with foes from whom it cannot shield itself in mystery and metaphysical subtleties [that is, with the more enlightened and rational views of this New Age.] Society is going forward in intelligence and charity, and of course is leaving the theology of the sixteenth century behind it.

We hail this revolution of opinion as a most auspicious event to the Christian cause. We hear much at present of efforts to spread the gospel. But Christianity is gaining more by the removal of degrading errors, than it would by armies of missionaries who would carry with them a corrupted form of the religion. We think the decline of Calvinism [and he might have said, of all the other old and related dogmas] one of the most encouraging facts in our passing history." (*Works*, Vol. I., p. 240.)

XXI.

REMISSION OF SINS.

THE prevailing idea among Christians a hundred years ago, — nor has the idea become quite obsolete yet — respecting the Divine forgiveness or remission of sins, was altogether erroneous. It was believed that sins could be forgiven and the sinning soul cleansed of its defilements, by an act of immediate Divine mercy, or through the willingness of God to exercise forgiveness, as natural filth may be washed from the body; and that this could be effected instantaneously, and is actually granted in a moment as the reward of faith alone. But Swedenborg teaches (or shows us that the Scripture teaches) a very different doctrine. He says that the

Divine Love which is Mercy itself, is the very essence of forgiveness; and that this Love is ever ready and waiting to flow into human hearts with its ineffable sweetness and delights; but that it can flow in and be received only in the degree that we come to see our evils in the light of truth, acknowledge them, and shun their indulgence as sins against God. As we do this, the evil of self-love is overcome or removed, and the good of disinterested neighborly love flows in, and with it a sweet and heavenly peace — a sense of the Divine presence which is essential Love and Forgiveness. So that the Divine forgiveness is not and cannot be experienced, except on condition of repentance and obedience — a voluntary self-surrender or turning away from moral evil, and yielding obedience to the laws of heavenly charity. Accordingly Swedenborg says: —

"It is believed by most people within the church that the remission of sins is the wiping or washing them away as of filth by water; and that after remission they are clean and pure in the way in which they go. Such an opinion prevails, especially with those who ascribe the all of salvation to faith alone. But it is to be observed that the case is quite otherwise with the remission of sins. The Lord remits sins to every one, since He is Mercy itself; nevertheless they are not remitted on that account, unless a man performs serious repentance,

desists from evils, and afterwards lives the life of faith and charity, and this even to the end of his life. When this is done the man receives from the Lord spiritual life which is called new life; and when he looks from this new life at the evils of his former life and holds them in aversion and horror, then sins are first remitted; for then the man is kept in truths and goods, and withheld from evils by the Lord. Hence it is evident what is meant by the remission of sins, and that it cannot be granted in an hour nor in a year." (A. C., 9014. See also A. C., 9443–9454.)

That this was Channing's belief concerning forgiveness or remission of sins, is plain from many passages in his writings. Not only did he reject the old idea, but he taught the new with scarcely less distinctness, if with less fullness, than did Swedenborg. To cite here a single passage: —

"Some Christians will tell me that the doctrine of Divine Forgiveness is the great glory of Christianity. But, I ask, to whom is Divine Forgiveness promised? To *all* indiscriminately? Did Christ publish from his Cross absolute unconditional pardon? Who does not know that throughout the whole teaching of the New Testament, repentance and remission of sins are always combined, and that the last is invariably used as a motive for the first? Who is forgiven in Christianity? The Prodigal!

Yes! But not while wasting his substance in riotous living; but when heart-broken, conscience-struck, he returns to his Father's house. Our Father's pardon was promised by Jesus to such as forsake sin and obey his Will; and this obedience is the End for which Divine Forgiveness is preached." (*The Perfect Life*, p. 277.)

XXII.

SALVATION: ITS MEANING AND NATURE.

THE prevailing Christian idea of salvation a hundred years ago, was, that it is deliverance from hell and its torments; that it is wrought by an act of immediate Divine mercy, and without any regard to the inner life or character of its subjects — provided they have faith. With this idea Swedenborg is everywhere and always at war. According to his teachings salvation is a thing of degrees — a certain advanced spiritual state — a more or less perfect, orderly and healthy condition of the human soul. A man is saved in the degree that all his natural hereditary and selfish proclivities are brought into due subjection and subordination to the higher and truly human faculties, and the Divine Wisdom and Love are so enthroned within him that he finds his chief delight in learning and doing the will of the

Lord. So that the higher his wisdom and the purer his love, that is, the more closely he is conjoined to the Lord, so much the more healthy and blissful is his soul, and in so much higher degree, therefore, is he saved.

And this blessed, orderly or saved state, is not one to be instantaneously or suddenly attained, but only through a long and brave conflict with the selfish propensities of the natural man — the foes of each one's own household. The means by which this state is reached, or salvation achieved, are the natural and spiritual truths we learn, our trials and disappointments, our joys and sorrows, our successes and defeats, our relations and intercourse with others, and all the varied discipline of life. By these means the All-loving and merciful One is perpetually working through all our lives, to recreate us in his own Divine likeness, and so to save us with an everlasting salvation — to fill us with his own Spirit and Life. In his chapter on the Holy Spirit, Swedenborg says: —

"The Lord is in the continual effort to produce these saving graces [repentance, reformation, regeneration, &c.] in man, because these are the steps to heaven; for He desires the salvation of all. . . And since to Him man's salvation was and forever is the end, it follows that the above-mentioned operations [of the Holy Spirit] are mediate ends, and salvation the ultimate end." (T. C. R., n. 142.)

Again in the Divine Providence: —

"Instantaneous reformation and consequent salvation would be comparatively like the instantaneous conversion of an owl into a dove and of a serpent into a sheep. Who that knows anything of man's life, does not see that this is impossible unless the nature of the owl and serpent is removed, and that of the dove and sheep implanted in their stead. It is also known that every intelligent man may become more intelligent and every wise man wiser; and that intelligence and wisdom may increase in man, and with some do increase from infancy until the end of life, and that man is thus being perfected continually. Why not spiritual intelligence and wisdom still more? These ascend above natural intelligence and wisdom by two degrees, and then they become angelic intelligence and wisdom which are ineffable, and increase forever with the angels. Who cannot comprehend, if he will, that it is impossible for that which is being forever perfected, to become perfect in an instant? Hence it is evident that all who think of salvation from life, think of no instantaneous salvation by immediate mercy, but of the means of salvation in which and through which the Lord operates according to the laws of his Divine Providence; that is, through which man is led by the Lord out of pure mercy. . .

"Instantaneous salvation out of immediate mercy

is the fiery flying serpent in the church. By the fiery flying serpent is meant evil gleaming with infernal fire, the same as by the fiery flying serpent in Isaiah xiv. 29. Such evil flies abroad in the church when instantaneous salvation from immediate mercy is believed in. . . If you take away repentance, that is, separate life from religion, what then is man but evil gleaming with infernal fire, or a fiery flying serpent in the church?—for without repentance man is in evil, and evil is hell." (D. P., n. 338, 340.)

And we find essentially the same doctrine of salvation taught throughout the writings of Channing. With him, as with Swedenborg, salvation meant the true and healthy condition of the soul —a state in which the lower propensities of our nature are duly subjected to the higher, or to the laws of heavenly love—a state of internal union or at-one-ment with the Lord. With him as with Swedenborg, the healthy, virtuous, regenerate soul is the *saved* soul. And his belief, too, in the method or way of salvation, was substantially in agreement with Swedenborg's. He did not believe in any instantaneous salvation, any more than in instantaneous growth from infancy to manhood, or in the instantaneous restoration to perfect bodily health of one who has inherited or been long afflicted with some physical malady. He believed that the

soul is saved precisely in the degree that the chains of evil habits and the power of evil dispositions are broken through self-denial and obedience, and the laws of God's unselfish love are voluntarily enthroned within. To cite a single passage from "The Perfect Life."

"Salvation is a sublime doctrine. But what does it mean? According to the Scriptures, salvation is to be rescued from moral evil, from error and sin, from the diseases of the mind, and to be restored to inward truth, piety and virtue. Consequently salvation and Christian obedience are one and the same thing. Nor indeed can salvation be anything else. I know but one salvation for a sick man, and that is to give him *health.* So I know but one salvation for a bad man, and that is to make him truly, thoroughly, conscientiously *good,* — to break the chains of his evil habits, — to raise him to the dignity and peace of a true religious life. An intelligent and moral being is saved and blessed just so far as he chooses freely — fully — what is good, great and God-like; as he adopts for his Rule the Will of God. I therefore repeat it: Salvation and Virtue are but different aspects of the same Supreme Good." (Pp. 277, '8.)

XXIII.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

SALVATION by the blood of Christ" is an expression often on the lips of Christian teachers, and of frequent occurrence in their writings. And there is ample warrant for this in the New Testament. The apostle John says: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;" and that He "washes us from our sins in his own blood." And Paul speaks of being "justified by his blood," and says, "we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins through his blood." This language has given rise to much controversy among Christians. But all the strife has arisen from a too literal interpretation of it, or from not understanding the true spiritual import of this Divine symbol.

What spiritual thing, then, does the blood of Christ symbolize or stand for? When this is known, it is easy to understand the meaning of our being washed, cleansed, redeemed and saved by his blood.

Swedenborg gives a rational and satisfactory answer to this question. He says that blood, which is the means of nourishing and vitalizing the body, is the symbol of that living truth by means of which the soul is nourished and vitalized. Christ's blood,

therefore, stands for the spirit and principles of his religion — for those high and holy truths contained in his Word, and of which He was Himself the very incarnation. This is what his blood corresponds to and signifies. To be cleansed and saved by the blood of Christ, therefore, is to be spiritually washed and saved — is to have our souls cleansed of their impure thoughts and evil desires by means of that divine-human truth symbolized by his blood — the truth which He Himself taught and lived and glorified, and thus accommodated to the needs of every human being.

When we heartily receive into our understanding any divine truth, and by means of it fight against and overcome some evil within us which that truth reveals, we are so far washed and redeemed by that truth — washed and redeemed by the blood of Christ, according to the spiritual and true meaning of this expression. And while we are doing this — cleansing our souls of their false persuasions and evil loves — we are at the same time building up a pure and virtuous character, or what is the same, we are receiving into our hearts the good of that celestial love which is the very soul and substance of truth. And this good of love is what Christ's *flesh* corresponds to and signifies.

From this brief explanation of these divine symbols, we may understand what it is to eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood. It is to receive into our

understandings the heavenly truths which he taught and lived, and to so apply those truths to life that we shall receive into our hearts the good of that unselfish love which is the substance and body of these truths. In brief, it is to receive and have our souls fed and nourished by Christ's own wise and unselfish life, which is the highest or heavenly life—the only true and eternal life.

And from this we may understand what Jesus meant when He called Himself "the living bread" from heaven, and said: "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me;" also when He said: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him;" and "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." For we have no true spiritual life, and can have none, except as we receive heavenly truth (the blood of the Lamb) into our understandings, and, through the faithful application of that truth to life, receive into our hearts the good of that unselfish love which is the life and soul of truth.

This is a condensed statement of what Swedenborg teaches on this subject. But we will quote a single passage by way of confirmation.

"Since all spiritual and celestial things relate solely to good and truth, it follows that flesh means the good of charity, and blood the truth of faith; and in the supreme sense the Lord as to the divine good of love and the divine truth of wisdom. . . It is

known that the Lord is the Word; and there are two principles to which all things in the Word relate, Divine Good and Divine Truth. Therefore if the Word is substituted for the Lord, it is plain that these two principles are meant by his flesh and blood. That blood means the Lord's divine truth or the truth of the Word, is evident from many passages. . . Such being the significance of blood, therefore the Lord gave his disciples the wine, saying, This is my blood; and wine signifies divine truth, therefore it also is called 'the blood of grapes,' Gen. xlix. 11. This is still further evident from the Lord's words: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you; . . . for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him,' John vi. 53–58. That blood here means the divine truth of the Word, is very manifest; for it is said that he who drinks it has life in him, and dwells in the Lord and the Lord in him; and this is effected by divine truth and a life according to it." (T. C. R., n. 706.)

And since love is the vital element in truth, therefore *blood* includes this element in its higher signification; and when used with reference to the regenerate in whom this element is developed, it denotes charity, or neighborly love.

"As everything," says Swedenborg, "has a spe-

cific meaning in relation to the man of whom it is predicated, so also has *blood*. In reference to the regenerate spiritual man, it denotes charity, or neighborly love; in respect to the regenerate celestial man, love towards the Lord; and in relation to the Lord, all his human essence, consequently essential love, or his mercy towards mankind. Hence *blood*, in general, as signifying love and the things of love, represents what is celestial, or of the Lord alone. With respect to man, *blood* denotes the celestial things which he receives from the Lord, which with the regenerate spiritual man are celestial-spiritual." (A. C., n. 1001.)

How similar was Channing's view of the divine significance of the blood of Christ, and of what is meant by our being redeemed, purchased, cleansed and saved by his blood, is plain from the following passage:—

"I prize the Cross and Blood of Christ as highly as any Christian can. In view of that Cross I desire ever to live; and of that Blood, in the *spiritual sense*, I desire ever to drink. I hope, as truly as any Christian ever did or could, to be saved by the Cross of Christ. But what do I mean by such language? Do I expect that the *wood* to which Christ was nailed is to save me? Do I expect that the *material* blood which trickled from his wounds is to save me? Or do I expect this boon from his bodily agonies? No! By the cross and blood of Christ, I mean nothing outward, nothing material. I mean

the Spirit, the Character, the Love of Jesus. . . I mean his Religion, which was sealed by his blood, and the Spirit of which shone forth most gloriously from the cross. . .

"I am astonished and appalled by the gross manner in which 'Christ's Blood' is often spoken of, as if his outward wounds and bodily sufferings could contribute to our salvation; as if aught else than his Spirit, his Truth, could redeem us. On other occasions we use the very words which we thus apply to Christ, and use them rationally. . . For example, we often say that our liberty was purchased and our country was saved 'by the *blood* of Patriots.' And what do we mean? — that the material blood which gushed from their bodies, that their wounds, that their agonies, saved their country? No! . . . By their blood we mean their patriotism, — their devotion to freedom, — approved in death. We mean their generous heroism, of which death was the crown. We mean the Principles for which they died, the Spirit which shone forth in their self-sacrifice, and which this sacrifice of their lives spread abroad and strengthened in the community. So by Christ's Blood I understand his Spirit. . . To be redeemed by his blood, is to be redeemed by his Goodness [which is the life and soul of his truth.] In other words, it is to be purified from all sin and restored to all virtue by the principles, the religion, the character, the all-conquering love of Jesus Christ." (*The Perfect Life*, pp. 279, '80.)

XXIV.

THE CROSS: AND WHAT IT SYMBOLIZES.

SWEDENBORG says that the Cross is the symbol of those internal conflicts — conflicts between good and evil, heaven and hell in the soul, or between the spiritual and the natural man — which every one who hopes to enter the kingdom of heaven by being born again, or born from Above, is called to endure. This inward conflict between good and evil, is what he calls spiritual temptation. It is the battle of the Lord, sometimes fierce and desperate — always more or less painful to the soul that engages in it. But it is indispensable to the soul's purification and complete development — indispensable to the unfolding of the highest and noblest life, or to the final victory of the spiritual over the natural man. It is the spiritual warfare of which Paul speaks, and which every regenerating soul must endure — a warfare as useful to the enlightening and strengthening of the soul, as it is necessary to its entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Hence we may see what is the true spiritual meaning of taking up the cross, and why the Lord says: "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me;" and "if any one will

come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

There is much in Swedenborg that is exceedingly interesting and instructive on this subject; but the following brief extracts are sufficient for our present purpose: —

"When the truths of faith which a man believes in his heart and according to which he desires to live, are assaulted within him, it is called a spiritual temptation, especially when the good of love in which he places his spiritual life, is assaulted. These assaults take place in various ways. . . They are made by the evil spirits who are present with man [and excite his evils;] and when they occur, they assume the appearance of interior anxieties and pains of conscience; for they affect and torment the man's spiritual life, because he supposes that they proceed from his own interiors and not from evil spirits. Man does not know that evil spirits are present with him — these spirits being in his evil and good spirits in his good affections." (N. J. D., n. 196.)

"The object contended for during temptations, is the dominion of good over evil or of evil over good. The evil which seeks to obtain dominion resides in the natural or external man, and the good, in the spiritual or internal man. If evil prevails, the natural man obtains dominion; but if good prevails, the spiritual man conquers." (Ibid., n. 190.)

"The ends to which temptations are conducive, are these: They gain for good dominion over evil, and for truth, dominion over the false; they confirm truths in the mind, and conjoin them to good; and they disperse evils and the falsities thence derived. They serve also to open the internal spiritual man, and to bring the natural into subjection to it; to destroy the loves of self and the world, and to subdue the lusts which proceed from them. When these things are effected, man acquires enlightenment and perception respecting the nature of good and its truth, and of falsity and its evil; whence he obtains intelligence and wisdom which afterwards increase continually." (Ibid., n. 194.)

"They who have not been instructed about the regeneration of man, imagine that he can be regenerated without temptation, and some think that he is regenerated when he has undergone one temptation. But it is to be observed that no one is regenerated without temptation, and that several temptations succeed one after another. The reason is, that regeneration has this for its end: that the life of the old man may die, and the new life which is celestial may revive or be established. Hence it may be seen that there must at all events be conflict; for the life of the old man resists, nor is it willing to be extinguished; and the life of the new man cannot enter unless where the life of the old is extinct. . .

"He who thinks from an enlightened rational principle, may see from this that man cannot be regenerated without combat, that is, without spiritual temptations; and further, that he is not regenerated by one temptation, but by many; for there are many kinds of evil which constituted the delight of the former life, that is, the old life; and all these evils cannot be subdued at once and together, for they inhere tenaciously, since they were rooted in the parents for many ages back, and hence are become innate in man, and confirmed by actual evils of his own from childhood; all of which evils are diametrically opposite to celestial good which is to be insinuated and to constitute the new life." (A. C., n. 8403.)

"When man is in temptation he is encompassed and obsessed by falsities and evils which hinder the influx of light from the Divine, that is, of truth and good, in which case he is as it were in darkness. . . But when he comes out of temptation, then light appears with its spiritual heat, that is, truth with its good. Hence he has gladness after anxiety: this is the morning which succeeds the night. The reason why good is then perceived and truth appears, is, that after temptation truth and good penetrate towards the interiors and are inrooted; for man, when in temptation, is, as it were, in hunger for good and in thirst for truth. Therefore when he comes out, he receives good as a hungry man does meat, and

truth as a thirsty man does drink. And besides, when light from the Divine appears, falsities and evils are removed; and when these are removed a way is made for good and truth to penetrate more interiorly." (A. C., n. 6829.)

And Channing saw and proclaimed the same truth very distinctly — using different language, it is true, and without seeming to recognize the agency or presence of evil spirits in temptation. He saw that conflict with some opposing force within — a fierce struggle with certain propensities which pollute and degrade the soul when they are allowed the mastery — is not only useful, but indispensable to the growth of a strong and noble character, or to the completest development of all the highest and best faculties of our nature. And this is the same as saying that we cannot attain to the heavenly life without temptation combats. Speaking in one of his discourses of the inward warfare between our natural or hereditary proclivities and the promptings of "reason, conscience and religion," or the higher principles of our nature, ne says: —

"But why is this warfare appointed? Not to extinguish these high principles; but to awaken and invigorate them. It is meant to give them a field for action, occasion for effort, and means of victory. True, virtue is thus opposed and endangered; but virtue owes its vigor and hardihood to obstacles,

and wins its crown by conflict. I do not say that God can find no school for character but temptation and trial and strong desire; but I do say that the present state is a fit and noble school. You would have the path of virtue from the very beginning smooth and strewed with flowers; and would this train the soul to energy? You would have pleasure always coincide with duty; and how, then, would you attest your loyalty to duty? You would have conscience and desire always speak the same language and prescribe the same path; and how, then, would conscience assert its supremacy? God has implanted blind desires which often rise up against reason and conscience, that He may give to these high faculties the dignity of dominion and the joy of victory. He has surrounded us with rivals to Himself, that we may love Him freely, and by our own unfettered choice erect his throne in our souls. He has given us strong desires of inferior things, that the desire of excellence may grow stronger than all. Make such a world as you wish, let no appetite or passion ever resist God's will, no object of desire ever come in competition with duty; and where would be the resolution, and energy, and constancy, and effort, and purity, the trampling under foot of low interests, the generous self-surrender, the heroic devotion, all the sublimities of virtue, which now throw lustre over man's nature and speak of his immortality? You would blot the precept of self-denial from the

Scriptures, and the need of it from human life, and in so doing you would blot out almost every interesting passage in man's history." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 118. See also *Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 33.)

XXV.

RELIGION WITHOUT ASCETICISM.

ACCORDING to Swedenborg the loves of self and the world are the ruling loves of the natural or unregenerate man. Whereas in the truly human or regenerate state, the opposite loves, that is, love of the Lord and love of the neighbor, bear rule. And the whole work of regeneration consists, not in uprooting or extinguishing these natural loves, but in bringing them into a state of due subjection and subordination to the higher spiritual loves. Christianity, therefore, as interpreted by him, inculcates purity, holiness, righteousness, without austerity or asceticism. It inculcates a reverent regard for our *whole* nature, the lower as well as the higher. It teaches that all our appetites and natural desires — our love of knowledge, love of wealth, love of amusement, love of pleasure, honor, power — are good and useful in their proper place; and are not, therefore, to be extinguished, but to be brought into complete subjection to the higher and truly human loves.

They are all good and useful as servants, but tyrannous and cruel as masters. And not only so, but natural delights become more and more delightful as the higher motive or spiritual affection — love of the Lord and the neighbor — enters into and vitalizes them. To cite one or two passages on this point from the seer's own writings: —

"It is well to observe that the man who is regenerated is not deprived of the delight of pleasures of the body or of [the natural] mind; for this delight he enjoys fully after regeneration, even more fully than before, but in an inverted ratio. The delight of pleasures before regeneration was the all of his life; but after regeneration the good of charity becomes the all of his life, and in this case the delight of pleasures serves as a means and an ultimate plane, in which spiritual good with its happiness and blessedness terminates. When, therefore, the order is to be inverted, then the former delight of pleasures expires and becomes nothing, and a new delight from a spiritual origin is insinuated in its place." (A. C., n. 8413.)

"Some suppose that whoever desires to be happy in the other world must by no means enjoy the pleasures of the body and of sense, but must abstain from all such delights, urging in favor of this, that corporeal and worldly pleasures abstract and detain the mind from spiritual and celestial life. They who think so, however, and therefore voluntarily give

themselves up to wretchedness while living in the world, are not aware of the real truth.

"It is by no means forbidden any one to enjoy corporeal or sensual pleasures, or those arising from the possession of lands, money, honors and public appointments; those of conjugial love and love of infants and children, of friendship and social intercourse; the pleasure of listening to singing and music, or of seeing beautiful things of various kinds, such as handsome apparel, well-furnished houses, magnificent gardens, and the like, all of which are delightful from harmony; the pleasure of smelling agreeable odors, of tasting delicacies and useful meats and drinks; and the pleasure of touch; for all these are the lowest or corporeal affections which have their origin from those which are interior. Interior affections which are living, all derive their delight from the good and the true; and the good and true derive theirs from charity and faith, and these come from the Lord, consequently from the very essential Life. Therefore affections and pleasures which have this origin are alive; and if genuine or from this source, they are never denied to any one. When pleasures are thus derived, their delight exceeds indefinitely that from every other origin." (A. C., n. 995.)

Precisely in accordance with the foregoing, were the belief and inculcations of Channing, as may be

seen from the following passage in his discourse on "Self-Denial."

"But, if Reason and Conscience are not to be denied, what is? I answer, that there are other principles in our nature. Man is not wholly reason and conscience. He has various appetites, passions, desires, resting on present gratification and on outward objects; some of them which we possess in common with inferior animals, such as sensual appetites and anger; and others belong more to the mind, such as love of power, love of honor, love of property, love of society, love of amusement, or a taste for literature and elegant arts. . . These are to be denied or renounced; by which I mean not exterminated, but renounced as masters, guides, lords, and brought into strict and entire subordination to our moral and intellectual powers. It is a false idea, that religion requires the extermination of any principle, desire, appetite, or passion, which our Creator has implanted. Our nature is a whole, a beautiful whole, and no part can be spared. You might as properly and innocently lop off a limb from the body, as eradicate any natural desire from the mind. All our appetites are in themselves innocent and useful, ministering to the general weal of the soul. They are like the elements of the natural world, parts of a wise and beneficent system, but, like those elements, are beneficent only when restrained." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 113, '14)

XXVI.

SIN: ITS NATURE.

SWEDENBORG makes a broad distinction between sin and hereditary or transmitted evil. Every one, he says, inherits from foregone ancestry certain propensities of greater or less degrees of strength, which incline him to seek his own ease, pleasure or personal gratification, regardless of the wishes, rights or welfare of others. He insists that the merely natural man is supremely selfish. But we are not *sinners* because of this natural selfishness or these inherited proclivities to evil. Sin, he says, consists in the conscious violation of some acknowledged law or rule of right — in acting contrary to some known moral precept, or some acknowledged moral obligation.

A man may inherit a strong propensity to lie or steal; but he is not a sinner because of this inheritance, any more than he is a liar or a thief before he commits these offences. He sins only when he ultimates this evil propensity, and actually lies or steals, knowing that to do so is to act contrary to a divine command. The propensity may be very strong in him; but if he regards its indulgence as wicked, and therefore shuns it, he does not sin. We sin only when we *do* evil, with the knowledge at the time

that it *is* evil. The selfish or evil desire may be very strong in us; but if we regard and shun its indulgence as a sin, we are free from guilt.

And not only so, but by continuing to do this, and at the same time acknowledging that it is the Lord alone who gives us the disposition and the power to resist the vicious propensity, we gradually overcome the evil inclination — lose all desire to transgress. And in this consists the great work of regeneration. It is the thorough mastery over all inherited vicious proclivities, which the Lord gives to every one who acknowledges Him, and humbly strives to obey his precepts. This is the doctrine concerning sin which Swedenborg teaches throughout his writings.

And that Channing held and taught the same doctrine, contrary to nearly all the established creeds of his day, too, is plain from the following passage: —

"By not a few people, sin is supposed to be a property of our nature, born with us; and we sometimes hear of the child as being sinful before it can have performed any action. From these and other causes, the word gives to many confused notions. Sin, in its true sense, is the violation of duty, and cannot, consequently, exist, before conscience has begun to act, and before power to obey it is unfolded. To sin is to resist our sense of right, to oppose known obligation, to cherish feelings or commit deeds which we know to be wrong. . . It

is to transgress those laws of equity, justice, candor, humanity, disinterestedness, which we all feel to belong and to answer to our various social relations. . . It is voluntary wrong-doing. Any gratification injurious to ourselves, is sin. Any act injurious to our neighbors, is sin. Indifference to our Creator, is sin. The transgression of any command which this excellent Being and rightful Sovereign has given us, whether by conscience or revelation, is sin. So broad is this term. It is as extensive as duty. It is not some mysterious thing wrought into our souls at birth. It is not a theological subtlety. It is choosing and acting in opposition to our sense of right, to known obligation." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 151, '2.)

"Sin is the chief of evils. May I not say, that nothing else deserves the name? No other evil will follow us beyond the grave. Poverty, disease, the world's scorn, the pain of bereaved affection, these cease at the grave. . . One and only one evil can be carried from this world to the next, and that is, the evil within us, moral evil, guilt, crime, ungoverned passion, the depraved mind, the memory of a wasted or ill-spent life, the character which has grown up under neglect of God's voice in the soul and in his Word. This, this will go with us, to stamp itself on our future frames, to darken our future being, to separate us like an impassable gulf from our Creator and from pure and happy beings, to be as a consuming fire and an undying worm." (Ibid., 166.)

XXVII.

ESTIMATE OF CALVINISM.

AT the time Swedenborg wrote, the Calvinistic system of theology was the generally accepted system in the Protestant churches. And it is interesting to compare his view of Calvinism with that of Channing, and to see how exactly each of these writer's estimate of the system agrees with that of the other. Swedenborg, treating of the dogma of predestination as taught by Calvin and his school, and afterwards "firmly established by the Synod of Dort and carried forth therefrom into the church as the palladium of religion," says: —

"But what more pernicious thing could have been devised, or could any thing more cruel be believed of God, than that some of the human race are damned by predestination? For it would be a cruel creed that the Lord who is love itself and mercy itself, should will that a multitude of men be born for hell, or that myriads of myriads should be born doomed, that is, devils and satans; and that from his Divine Wisdom which is infinite, He should not have provided and does not provide that those who live well and acknowledge God, should not be cast into eternal fire and torment. He is still the Lord, the Creator and Saviour of all, and

He alone leads all, and desires not the death of any. What, therefore, can be believed or thought of that is more horrible, than that whole nations and peoples should, under his auspices and oversight, be handed over by predestination to the devil to satiate his voracity? But this is an offspring of the faith of the present church (1771); the faith of the New Church abhors it as a monster." (T. C. R., n. 487.)

Look, now, at Channing's estimate of the same system. After a fair but summary statement of its peculiar and leading features, he says: —

"Such is Calvinism, as gathered from the most authentic records of the doctrine. Whoever will consult the famous Assembly's Catechism and Confession, will see the peculiarities of the system in all their length and breadth of deformity. A man of plain sense, whose spirit has not been broken to this creed by education or terror, will think that it is not necessary for us to travel to heathen countries to learn how mournfully the human mind may misrepresent the Deity." (*Works*, Vol. I., p. 223.)

And after devoting some fifteen pages to a moral argument of great force against Calvinism, showing that the testimony of our rational and moral faculties is clearly against it, and that "our religion, fairly construed, gives no countenance to that system which has arrogated to itself the distinction of

Evangelical," he sums up his opinion of the system in these words: —

"The general spirit of Christianity affords a very strong presumption that its records teach no such doctrines as we have opposed. This spirit is love, charity, benevolence. Christianity, we all agree, is designed to manifest God as perfect Benevolence, and to bring men to love and imitate Him. Now is it probable that a religion having this object, gives views of the Supreme Being, from which our moral convictions and benevolent sentiments shrink with horror, and which, if made our pattern, would convert us into monsters! It is plain that, were a human parent to form himself on the universal Father as described by Calvinism, . . . we should charge him with a cruelty not surpassed in the annals of the world." (*Works*, Vol. I., p. 238.)

XXVIII.

FAITH.

PERHAPS the most prominent doctrine, and the one most insisted on by religious teachers in Swedenborg's day, was the doctrine of *salvation by faith alone.* It was held and taught that the belief in certain dogmas, particularly that of a vicarious atonement, is indispensable to the soul's salva-

tion; that without this belief no one can be saved, however pure and righteous his life; and that with it, he is sure of the Divine forgiveness; his sins are all remitted or washed away, no matter what his character or ruling love, this being held of no account in the matter of the soul's salvation.

With this doctrine Swedenborg makes no compromise, and towards it shows no favor. From the beginning to the end of his system he is directly and persistently at war with it. He insists that it is not *believing*, but *living according to the truth we understand and accept*, that saves; that it is love or charity, not faith, which is of paramount importance; that faith without charity is like the sun's light without its quickening and invigorating warmth; that there is no such thing as true faith separate from charity; and that the doctrine of salvation by faith alone is not only false, but most pernicious in its tendency, as it leads to the undervaluing of charity or righteousness of life. He says that "charity is the life of faith," and that "the Lord is not conjoined with man by faith, but by the life of faith which is charity;" that "charity makes both heaven and the church, and not faith separate from charity;" that "the church would be one, and not divided into many, if charity were its essential;" that "a difference in the doctrines of faith and in the rites of external worship would then be unimportant;" that "faith separate from charity is like the

light of winter in which all terrestrial growths are torpid and nothing is produced;" and that "charity or love of the neighbor is to do what is good, just and upright in every work and in every office." It were easy to fill a volume with illustrative extracts, but the following are sufficient for our purpose:—

"There is no other faith than that which is grounded in charity. He that has no charity cannot have the smallest portion of faith. Charity is the very ground in which faith is implanted: it is the heart whence faith derives existence and life. Therefore the ancients compared love and charity to the heart, and faith to the lungs, both of which have their seat in the breast. The comparison is most just, because for any one to endeavor to form to himself the life of faith without charity, is like endeavoring to continue bodily life by the lungs alone, without the heart." (A. C., n. 1843.)

"Let it be well considered whether to have faith be anything else than to live according to it; and whether to live according to it be not only to know and think, but also to will and do; for faith is not in a man while it is only in his knowledge and thought, but when it is also in his will and deeds. Faith in man is a faith of the life; but faith not yet in him, is a faith of the memory and of the thought derived therefrom. To have a faith which is of the life, is to believe in God; but to believe those things which are from God and not to believe in God, is a mere

historical faith which is not saving." (Ap. Ex., n. 250.)

"The truths of faith viewed without love, are merely expressions without life; but they receive life by love, that is, by conjunction with the good of love. Hence it may be seen that in no case is there anything of faith except with those who are principled in the good of love, and that the faith is according to the love. . . Neither is there any confidence or trust; . . . for there is no spiritual confidence except that which flows in through the good of love or charity." (A. C. 4352.)

"They who make worship consist in a name, as the Jews did in the name of Jehovah, and as Christians do in the name of the Lord, are not more worthy than others on that account; because a name avails nothing. But *being such* as the Lord requires, this is to believe on his name. And when it is said that there is salvation in no other name but the name of the Lord, the meaning is, that there is salvation in no other doctrine, and indeed in nothing else, but mutual love, which is the true doctrine of faith; that is, in nothing else but the Lord, because all love, and the faith proceeding from love, is from Him alone." (A. C., n. 2009, also n. 2261.)

"In the other life the knowledge of the things belonging to faith is of no avail; for the worst of persons and even the infernals themselves may possess such knowledge. But what avails is a life

according to knowledges, this being what all knowledges have for their end. . . And the life of the knowledges of faith is no other than the life of charity; for the law and the prophets, that is, the whole doctrine of faith, with all its knowledges, consists in love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor. . . This life of charity is what saves after death, and not any life of faith without charity; for no life of faith can possibly exist without charity. They who are principled in the life of love and charity, are in the Lord's life; and no one can be conjoined to Him by any other. . . All the truths of faith have charity for their end; and if this is not within them [that is, if the receiver does not internally regard the formation of a heavenly character as the primary thing for which the truths of faith are given], they are inwardly rejected." (Ibid., n. 2049.)

"The doctrinals of faith derived from the Word, which are the precepts of Christian life, are spiritual laws. These are of no use whatever unless they become the laws of life. Let a man consider whether he is endowed with anything except what enters into his very life; and whether a man's life which is really life, be elsewhere than in his will. . . That man may be regenerated and become a church, he must be introduced by truth to good; and when truth becomes truth in the will and act, he is then introduced. This truth is good, and is called the good of truth. Nothing becomes internal until it is im-

planted in the will, because the will-principle is the inmost of man. So long, therefore, as good and truth are out of the will and only in the understanding, they are out of the man; for the understanding is without and the will is within." (Ibid., n. 5826, 4352.)

And we find the very same doctrine clearly taught and strongly emphasized by Channing. He insists not less earnestly than Swedenborg, that there is no such thing as a genuine saving faith apart from charity or righteousness of life; and that the truths of faith are of no avail save as a *means* towards the formation of a virtuous and Christ-like character — righteousness being the great *end* of all belief or faith; and unless this end be attained, the belief, or mere intellectual apprehension of truth, is of no value; the faith is barren and dead, and therefore is not faith any more than a dead body is a man. Take for illustration and confirmation the following passage:—

"The New Testament," it is said, "lays the greatest stress on Faith. 'To be saved, we must believe,' men say. 'Virtue, purity, sanctity are not enough. Faith in Christ is the possession which is most to be prized.' I might reply to this, that Paul taught a different doctrine in that memorable passage where, in comparing Faith, Hope and Charity, he said, 'the greatest of these is Charity.' I waive, however, that reply. I acknowledge the importance

of Faith. But still I maintain the *supremacy* of virtuous obedience. For what is Faith, and what is its use? To believe in Christ is to receive and cherish those great truths from which a pure life flows,—by which the mind is strengthened to withstand evil, to overcome inward and outward foes, and to press forward to Perfection. The value of Faith lies in its power over the character,—in the force of holy purpose, in the enlargement of philanthropy,—in the union of the mind to God,—to which it is fitted to exalt us. In other words, Faith is a *means*, and Obedience is the END. What is it to believe in Christ? I answer:—It is to recognize a divine excellence and authority in his Precepts, and resolutely to adopt them as our Rule of Life. It is to see a divine purity in his Character, and resolutely to make it our model. . . It is to believe that the pure in heart shall see God; and under this conviction to cleanse the thoughts, imagination and desires. It is to believe that the merciful shall find mercy, and the forgiving be forgiven; and through this confidence to cherish a placable and affectionate virtue. . . In a word, Faith is to believe that if we hear *and do* the words which Jesus spake, we shall be like the man who built his house upon the rock; and in this *confidence* to OBEY. I know nothing plainer than the true use of Faith. It is enjoined wholly for its practical influences, simply to aid and strengthen us to resist sin." (*The Perfect Life*, pp. 273, '4.)

XXIX.

HEAVEN AND HELL WITHIN MEN.

THE prevailing idea among Christians a hundred years ago, was, that heaven and hell are objective realities,—are *places* or *localities* into which people may be admitted as one may be admitted into a palace or a prison; and that when admitted, they would straightway experience the joys of the one or the miseries of the other, as the case might be. And this belief is according to the appearance of truth in the letter of Scripture; for, from the literal sense, both heaven and hell do certainly appear to be opposite localities—the one a high and the other a low *place.*

But according to Swedenborg heaven is a *state* and not a *place;* so likewise is hell. Both, he says, are within the soul; the former consisting essentially of that pure and unselfish love which is a feeble reflection of the Divine; and the latter, of that supreme self-love which is the opposite of the Divine, and closely allied to that of the lower orders of creation. It is impossible, therefore, for any to go to heaven, save those in whom the heavenly life or character—that is, the life of unselfish love—is formed or developed to some extent. And all who suffer themselves to be domi

nated by their lower nature, that is, by their selfish and worldly loves, remain in a low state — the very state denoted by hell. So that every one carries with him his own heaven or his own hell, as surely as he carries his own character which is determined by his dominant love. If, therefore, he has not, through self-denial and self-conflict, overcome the inordinate loves of self and the world and developed the higher and purer loves, he will have no desire for the companionship of angels. Their society would be so uncongenial to him that he would shun it as something oppressive and suffocating beyond endurance. Among other illustrative passages that might be cited, take the following: —

"It can in no case be said that heaven is without one, but that it is within him; for every angel receives the heaven which is without him according to the heaven which is within him. This plainly shows how much he is deceived, who believes that to go to heaven is merely to be taken up among the angels, without any regard to the quality of one's interior life; that heaven may, therefore, be given to every one from immediate mercy; when yet, unless heaven be within a person, nothing of the heaven which is without him flows-in and is received.

"Many spirits entertain this opinion [that heaven may be granted from immediate mercy]. And because of their belief, they have been taken up into heaven; but when they came there, on account of

their interior life being contrary to that of the angels, they grew blind as to their intellectual faculties till they became like idiots, and were tortured as to their will faculties so that they behaved like madmen. In a word, they who go to heaven after living wicked lives, gasp there for breath, and writhe like fish taken from the water into the air, and like animals in the ether of an air-pump when the air has been exhausted. Hence it is evident that heaven is not without one but within him." (H. H. 54. See also A. C., n. 3884, 5057, 10,659.)

"As love to the Lord and the neighbor make the life of heaven in man, so the loves of self and the world when they have the dominion, make the life of hell in him. . . They in whom these latter loves make the life, will good only to themselves, and not to others except for the sake of themselves. And since their life is from hell, they despise others in comparison with themselves, are angry at them if they do not favor themselves, hate them, burn with revenge and desire to commit every kind of outrage against them. Such things at length become the delights of their life, that is, of their loves. These are they who have hell in themselves, and who go into hell after death [that is, enter more fully into their own acquired life and into association with spirits of a kindred character], since their life agrees with the life of those in hell; for such is the character of all who are there, and every one

comes to his own [in the hereafter]." (A. C., n. 10,741–'3.)

"They who do not know that the vital fire in man is not from elemental [or natural] fire, cannot help thinking that the fire of hell means such fire as exists in this world; when yet no such fire is meant in the Word, but the fire which pertains to love, that is, to man's life, proceeding from the Lord as a sun. This fire, when it enters those who are in principles of an opposite nature, is turned into the fire of lusts [and passions], which are those of revenge, hatred and cruelty, springing from self-love and the love of the world. This is the fire that torments those who are in the hells. . . The fire which proceeds from the Lord as a sun, is heavenly fire; and this fire is pure love [fire or heat being the natural correspondent of love]." (A. C., n. 6832.)

And throughout the writings of Channing we catch frequent glimpses of this same truth. He saw that the human soul is the sublimest of all God's works; and that the development and strengthening of its noblest powers, and their commanding sway over the lower propensities, or the formation of a character allied to the Divine, is man's highest good — his promised *heaven;* and that the surrender of one's self to the dominion of selfishness, worldliness, hate and lust — the tyranny of the lower propensities over the higher, is his greatest misery —

his certain *hell.* Thus he held and taught, as did Swedenborg three-quarters of a century before, that heaven and hell are not *places* but *states;* that both are within and not without the human soul. He says: —

"Another great truth dawns on me when I look within. I learn more and more that the great springs of happiness and misery are in the mind, and that the efforts of men to secure peace by other processes than by inward purification, are vain strivings; and Christianity is not only consistent with, but founded on, this great truth; teaching us that the kingdom of heaven is within us, and proposing, as its great end, to rescue the mind from evil, and to endue it with strength and dignity worthy its divine origin. . . The great doctrine of Christianity is that of a higher life, where the spiritual germ within us will open forever, and where the immortal good after which the mind aspires will prove a reality." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 52.)

"The omnipotent Creator, we have reason to think, can bestow nothing greater than intelligence, love, rectitude, energy of will and of benevolent action; for these are the splendors of his own nature. We adore Him for these. In imparting these, He imparts, as it were, Himself. We are too apt to look abroad for good. But the only true good is *within.* . . The only true and durable riches belong to the mind. A soul, narrow and debased, may ex-

tend its possessions to the ends of the earth, but is poor and wretched still." (*Works*, Vol. III., pp. 210, '11.)

Again, in his sermon on "Christian worship," where, in proclaiming some views of the Unitarian denomination, he clearly means to be understood as expressing his own, he says:—

"Most other denominations expect salvation more or less from what Jesus does abroad, especially from his agency on the mind of God. You expect it from what He does within your own minds. His great glory, according to your views, lies in his influence on the human soul, in the communication of his spirit to his followers. To you salvation, heaven and hell have their seat in the soul." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 331, '2.)

XXX.

THE LOVE OF USE.

ACCORDING to Swedenborg, man was created to be a form of use in the kingdom of heaven; and the highest happiness is experienced only when he regards *use* as the great end of his existence, and seeks to encourage and strengthen in himself *the love of use.* And he does this when his ruling purpose is to do the special work he is set to do,

honestly and conscientiously — to perform that particular use in the best possible manner. In this way he cultivates the love of use, and steadily advances towards the perfection of his being — a state in which the highest happiness is experienced in the performance of uses from a genuine love of use. For even the celestial angels "have their happiness from no other source;" which is but another way of saying that the happiness of heaven results from the active exercise of the soul's best powers, which exercise tends perpetually towards the perfection of the character. And the more exalted and perfect the character becomes, the more intense and genuine becomes the love of use, and the more exquisite the delight felt in its performance. Accordingly Swedenborg says: —

"Heavenly joy is the delight experienced in doing something useful to ourselves and others; and the delight of use derives its essence from love and its existence from wisdom. The delight of use arising from love through wisdom, is the life and soul of all heavenly joys. In heaven there are most joyful consociations which exhilarate the minds of the angels, delight their hearts, fill their bosoms with pleasure and recreate their bodies; but not until they have performed uses in their offices or employments. From these uses is the soul or life of all their joys and delights." (C. L., n. 5.)

"Charity, since it consists in exercise or use, is

nothing unless it manifests itself in the works of charity. He who loves his neighbor as himself, never perceives the delight of charity except in its exercise. Therefore a life of charity is a life of uses. Such is the life of the universal heaven; for the Lord's kingdom, being a kingdom of mutual love, is a kingdom of uses. Hence every pleasure derived from charity receives its delight from use; and the more exalted the use, so much the greater is the delight; and hence the angels receive happiness from the Lord according to the nature and quality of the use they perform." (A. C., n. 997.)

And substantially the same idea is found in the writings of Channing. He saw that usefulness *as an end* — the doing of one's work, whatever that work may be, in a faithful, honest, conscientious manner — is the true way to develop that completeness and perfection of character which fits us for the society of the blessed. Accordingly he says: —

"This is one of the beautiful ordinations of Providence, that, to get a living, a man must be *useful.* Now this usefulness ought to be an *end* in his labor as truly as to earn his living. He ought to think of the benefit of those he works for, as well as of his own; and in so doing, in desiring amidst his sweat and toil to serve others as well as himself, he is exercising and growing in benevolence as truly as if he were distributing bounty with a large hand to the

poor. Such a motive hallows and dignifies the commonest pursuit. It is strange that laboring men do not think more of the vast usefulness of their toils, and take a benevolent pleasure in them on this account. . .

"Be a man's vocation what it may, his rule should be to do its duties perfectly, to do the best he can, and thus to make perpetual progress in his art. In other words, Perfection should be proposed; and this I urge not only for its usefulness to society, nor for the sincere pleasure which a man takes in seeing a work well done. This is an important means of self-culture. In this way the idea of Perfection takes root in the mind, and spreads far beyond the man's trade. He gets a tendency towards completeness in whatever he undertakes." (*Works*, Vol. II., pp. 384,'5.)

XXXI.

PRAYER.

ACCORDING to Swedenborg, the essential thing in prayer is the heart's sincere desire; and what a man desires above all else, is what he really prays for. He may from habit, or from the established ritual in the denomination to which he belongs, repeat words which do not express his heart's desire. In such case the words of prayer are but empty and

unmeaning sounds, and their utterance cannot profit the petitioner, — can open no fountains of heavenly life in his soul, no blessed communication with the Lord or the angels. It may, indeed, lull him who repeats them into a false security, blind him to his real spiritual condition, and so be considerably worse than useless. Genuine prayer is the heart's deep desire to know and do the will of the Lord, — to have one's own will brought into complete subjection and cordial agreement with the Divine will. And such desire, when sincere, will be in the constant effort to express itself in outward action, — in works of faithfulness, honesty, usefulness and love. The life of such an one, therefore, will be a sober, active, righteous life — a life of genuine charity. And where such a life, or at least the longing and striving for it, does not exist, there can be no true prayer, whatever words the lips may utter. There is no such thing, therefore, as genuine prayer apart from a life of charity; for its very soul and essence are wanting. Accordingly Swedenborg says: —

"Essential divine worship consists primarily in the life and not in prayers. . . Inasmuch as the quality of prayers is according to the state of a man's heart, therefore prayers offered up when the heart is in evil, are not true prayers of worship. . . Moreover, a man who is in the life of charity prays continually, although not with the mouth yet with the heart; for that which is of his love is continually in his

thought, even when he is unconscious of it. Hence it is evident that prayer in the spiritual sense denotes worship from love. But these ideas are not relished by those who place piety in prayers and not in the life." (Ap. Ex., n. 325.)

"Prayers are only the externals of worship, for they proceed from a man through his mouth. Therefore a man's prayers are according to the quality of his life. It matters not that he assumes a humble deportment, kneels and sighs when he prays; these are external things. . . In everything which he utters there is affection; and every man, spirit and angel is his own affection, for his affection is his life. It is the affection itself which speaks, and not the man without it. Therefore his prayer is according to the quality of his affection. Spiritual affection is what is called charity towards our neighbor; to be in this affection, is to be in a state of true worship; prayer is what thence proceeds." (Ibid.)

That this was Channing's idea of prayer, is plain from the following passage: —

"It is only by using the power we have, that we can gain new aids from Heaven; and these aids will be made effectual only by our own faithful use of them. The essence of prayer is desire; and to pray for God's spirit is to desire and choose virtue, holiness, as our supreme good; so that in the promise of the Spirit to prayer, the great moral principle of

the Divine administration is adhered to. 'To him that hath, shall be given.' The common modes of speaking of prayer, as if it were mere asking, or did not include moral effort, seem to me very pernicious." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 419.)

XXXII.

SEEING AND KNOWING GOD.

SWEDENBORG says that even the angels in heaven do not all see God alike; for his appearance differs as their states differ. To those, in the highest or celestial heaven, that is, to those whose love is purest, most exalted and fervent, He appears as a Sun, immeasurably more brilliant than the sun of this world; because such appearance corresponds to, and is one of the normal results of, the clear shining of his truth and love in their hearts. To the spiritual angels, or those in a lower state, He appears less brilliant — comparatively as a Moon. And to infernal spirits — those who are dominated by the passions and propensities of their lower nature — those whose souls are darkened by falsity, selfishness and sin, He appears as darkness and thick darkness according to the nature and degree of the evil in which they are immersed. For the great and eternal law of correspondence

between the inner and the outer, is what determines the character of the whole phenomenal world in the hereafter, even the appearance of the Lord Himself.

And not only so, but we are told that God appears different to different persons in this life — to each one according to his internal character or spiritual condition. They who are nearest to Him, that is, who receive his unselfish love into their hearts in largest measure, and let it shine out most conspicuously in their lives — who are most *like* God in the spirit and temper of their minds — see Him most truly. They understand his nature, and therefore see Him, from the spirit and principles in themselves which are from Him. As we deny self, and encourage and strengthen in our hearts purity of motive, nobleness of purpose, and unselfish desire for the welfare of others, we receive more of God's own life, become more like Him, and so have a better understanding or a clearer view of Him. As it is written: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

In accordance with this idea and in confirmation of our statement, we cite the following from Swedenborg: —

"That the Lord appears to every one according to his quality [or state], may be manifest from this consideration: that He appears to those in the inmost or third heaven as a Sun from which proceeds

ineffable light, because the inhabitants of that heaven are principled in the good of love to the Lord; and that He appears to those in the middle or second heaven as a Moon, because the inhabitants of that heaven are more remotely or obscurely in love to Him, being principled in love towards their neighbor; but in the ultimate or first heaven, He does not appear as a sun nor yet as a moon, but only as light, which light far exceeds that of the world. And since the Lord appears to every one according to his quality, therefore He cannot appear to those in hell otherwise than as a dusky cloud and thick darkness. From these considerations it may be clearly seen that the Lord appears to every one according to his quality [or character], because according to reception." (A. C., n. 6832.)

"No one can see God otherwise than from such principles as are in himself; as he who is in hatred, sees Him from hatred, he who is in unmercifulness, sees Him from unmercifulness; and on the other hand, they who are in charity and mercy, see Him from and in these principles. The case herein is as with the rays of light, which, where they fall into ugly forms, are turned into ugly colors; but when they fall into beautiful forms, are then turned into beautiful colors." (Ibid., n. 8819. See also 3425, 6380.)

And Channing had the same idea. He saw that

selfishness and sin obscure the moral vision, and take away or prevent a clear perception of the Divine character; and that only through inward purification — only through the victory over inward evil acquired by self-denial and self-conflict, can the "spiritual eye be purged for a brighter perception of the Holy One." How clearly is this taught in the following passage!

"You say that you desire a new and nearer knowledge of your Creator. Let this thirst for a higher consciousness of the Infinite Being, lead you to oppose whatever you feel to be at war with God's Purity, God's Truth and God's Righteousness. Just in proportion as you gain a victory over the evil of which you have become aware in yourself, will your spiritual eye be purged for a brighter perception of the Holy One. And this in its turn will strengthen you for a yet more strenuous resistance of sin, — which will prepare you for still more intimate acquaintance with the Divine Nature and Character. This attainment to a knowledge of God and this instant resistance of sin, are most intimately and vitally related. Neither can advance beyond the other. For God, as the All-Good, can be known only through our own growing goodness. No man living in the deliberate violation of his duty, in willful disobedience to God's commands, as taught by conscience, can possibly make progress in acquaintance with the Supreme Being. Vain are all acts of

worship in church or in secret, vain are religious reading and conversation, without this instant fidelity. Unless you are willing to withstand the desire which the inward monitor, enlightened as it always is by the Divine Spirit, condemns, you must, you will, remain a stranger to your Heavenly Father. Evil passions and sensual impulses darken the intellect and sear the heart. Especially important is it — indispensable, indeed — that self-indulgence and self-will shall be determinedly withstood. While these enthral us, never can we comprehend the true glory of God. For his glory is Perfect Love." (*The Perfect Life*, pp. 95, '6.)

XXXIII.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

IT is quite common to hear Christians speak of God as the Father of all men, of the evil as well as the good. But according to Swedenborg, God is truly the Father of those only who are his children; and only those are his children who are begotten or born of Him, who are spiritually like Him, whose ruling love bears some resemblance to the Divine Love. The term is one which expresses a spiritual relationship, and denotes or involves therefore a spiritual likeness.

True, God exercises a paternal care over the evil as well as over the good. So He exercises a paternal care over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea; but we should not, therefore, call Him the Father of the wolf, the raven, or the shark, any more than we should call Him the Father of the flowers of the field, the trees of the forest, or the earth on which we tread. And the obvious reason is, that these have no moral likeness to God. They lack the *spiritual* qualities necessary to stamp them as children of the Most High.

And wicked men — they who have never been born of God, and therefore have no moral likeness to Him — they whose ruling loves are supremely selfish, and therefore the very opposite of the Divine Love — these, according to Swedenborg, are not properly the children of God; nor is God their Father, seeing they have never been begotten of Him, never been spiritually renewed after his image and likeness. This agrees with the Saviour's teaching, when, in conversing with the Jewish pharisees He says: "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father." And when in reply to this, they said, "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God," what was the rejoinder? "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceed forth and came from God. . .

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him;"—clearly teaching us that the class of persons addressed on that occasion, and all of like character, are not the children of God; and that not God, but quite a different personage, is their father.

And precisely this idea was held by Channing, as may be seen from the following passage:—

"To us there is 'one God even the Father.' Christianity has no Truth to teach more encouraging and inspiring than this. But what do we mean when we call God our FATHER? Does this term imply nothing more than that He created us? He created the stone: Is He therefore its Father? Do we mean that He gives us bodies and the pleasures of sensitive existence? These He gives to the bird and insect; but the Scriptures nowhere call Him their Parent. No! It is clear that this word expresses a spiritual relation. It declares God's connexion with the Human Soul. God is the Father of those beings, and of those only, whom He has created in his own image, whom He has gifted with a Spirit like his own, whom He has framed for the end that they may approach Him in his highest attributes. To be a Parent is to communicate a *kindred nature*, and to watch over, educate and guide this nature to perfect development." (*The Perfect Life*, p. 255.)

XXXIV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

SWEDENBORG rejects the old, and still popular, doctrine of the Divine Trinity; and repeatedly declares that a belief in three Divine *Persons* is a belief in three Gods. Whatever the lips may be forced to utter or the pen to inscribe, he says the believer in the Tripersonality of God really *thinks* of three Divine Beings or Gods; and that it is a person's *thought*, not the mere utterance of his lips, which shows what he really believes. And precisely this, in substance, says Channing — as I have already had occasion to show. (See page 47.)

Yet Swedenborg teaches that there is a trinal distinction in the Divine Nature — not of *persons*, however, but of essential divine principles or attributes. The trinity in God, as he explains it, is not a mysterious and incomprehensible but a perfectly intelligible and rational trinity. It is one which finds its natural correspondent and complete illustration in the sun — the fittest type of God which the realm of inanimate nature affords. Heat and light, together with their proceeding or operative energy, constitute the trinity in the sun. And the sun's heat corresponds to the essential Divinity which is pure and perfect Love, and is what is signified by the Father

in the Christian Scriptures. Its light corresponds to truth, or the divine-human form of love — the form in which love manifests itself to the mental eye, as heat manifests itself to the bodily eye in the form of light; and this is what is meant in the Scripture by the Son, who is said to bring the Father forth to view, to be the personal manifestation or "express image" of Him, and who (speaking as the living embodiment of eternal Truth) says: "I am the light of the world." And the proceeding and quickening energy of the sun's heat and light in the realm of nature, corresponds to the proceeding and quickening influence of the Divine Love and Wisdom in the realm of spirit; and this Holy Proceeding is what is meant by the Holy Spirit.

Every human being, too, who is born of God — created anew in the image and likeness of his Maker — furnishes an illustration of Swedenborg's doctrine of the Divine Trinity; for every such person is an image of this Trinity. His regenerated and unselfish will is an image of the Divine Love; his enlightened understanding is an image of the Divine Wisdom; and the outgoing or active operation of his wise head and loving heart in deeds of mercy, beneficence and use, is an image of the Holy Proceeding of love and wisdom from the Lord — an image of the Holy Spirit.

A further illustration of the same doctrine is seen in the human soul and body, and the proceeding or

joint operation of the two. And if, as the Bible teaches, man was originally created in the likeness of God, we should expect to find in him (should we not?) an image of the trinity in God, and an explanation and illustration of its nature.

But we will let Swedenborg speak for himself on this subject. He says: —

"The Holy Spirit is the same as the Divine Sphere, if by this be meant the Divine Love and Wisdom, which two proceed from Jehovah the Lord out of the sun of the angelic heaven, like heat and light from the sun of the natural world, and compose its sphere; for the heat proceeding out of the sun of the angelic heaven is in its essence love, and the light thence proceeding in its essence is wisdom; and the heat and light proceeding from the sun of the natural world, correspond to these two." (*Swedenborg's Answer to the fifth of Hartly's nine questions: — appended to his Doctrine of the Lord.*)

Again he says: —

"That there is a trinity (*trinum*) in the Lord, viz., the essential Divine which is called the Father, the Divine Human which is called the Son, and the Divine Proceeding which is called the Holy Spirit, may be clearly seen from the Word, from the Divine essence, and from heaven. From the Word, — where the Lord Himself teaches that the Father and He are one, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him and the Father. . . From the Divine essence, — from

which it appears that one Divine [attribute] by itself is not possible, but there must be a trine. This trine consists of *esse* [being], *existere* [existence] and proceeding; for *esse* must needs exist, and when it exists it must proceed [or operate], that it may produce; and this trine is one in essence and in person, and is God. This may be illustrated by a comparison. An angel of heaven is a trine, and thereby one. The *esse* of an angel is that which is called his soul, and his *existere* is that which is called his body; and the proceeding from both is what is called the sphere of his life, without which an angel has neither existence nor being. By this trine an angel is an image of God, and is called a son of God, and also an heir, yea, a god. Yet an angel is not life from himself, but is a recipient of life — God alone being life from Himself. From heaven, — because the Divine Trinity, which is one in essence and in person, is such in heaven. For the Divine called the Father, and the Divine Human called the Son, appears there before the angels as a sun; and the Divine proceeding from it, as light united to heat, — the light being divine truth, and the heat being divine good. Thus the Divine which is called the Father, is the divine *esse;* the Divine Human which is called the Son, is the divine *existere* from that *esse;* and the Divine which is called the Holy Spirit, is the Divine Proceeding from the divine *existere* and the divine *esse.* This trine is the Lord in heaven: his Divine Love is

what appears there as a sun." (Ap. Ex., n. 1111. See also E. U., n. 159)

Now we do not find in Channing's writings a distinct or formal statement of his belief in a Divine Trinity of any kind. Yet, without any such formal statement, it is clear that he believed in a Trinity closely allied to, if not identically the same as, that taught by Swedenborg. He believed God to be essential Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, — a belief that he has often expressed; and he believed that there is a constant emanation of these principles from Himself — a holy, enlightening and quickening influence continually going forth from Him and operating upon the moral universe, as the rays of light and heat continually go forth from the sun and exert a quickening influence upon the material universe. And that this Divine emanation or influence is what he understood to be meant by the Holy Spirit, is plain from the following passage: —

"I would on no account disparage the gracious aids and influences which God imparts to the human soul. The promise of the Holy Spirit is among the most precious in the Sacred Volume. Worlds could not tempt me to part with the doctrine of God's intimate connection with the mind, and of his free and full communications to it. . . Scripture and experience concur in teaching, that, by the Holy Spirit, we are to understand a divine assistance adapted to

our moral freedom, and accordant with the fundamental truth, that virtue is the mind's own work. By the Holy Spirit I understand an aid which must be gained and made effectual by our own activity; an aid which no more interferes with our faculties than the assistance which we receive from our fellow-beings; an aid which silently mingles and conspires with all other helps and means of goodness; an aid, by which we unfold our natural powers in a natural order, and by which we are strengthened to understand and apply the resources derived from our munificent Creator." (*Works*, Vol. III., p. 244.)

And in other places where he speaks of "the spiritual influence" and "spiritual aid" that comes continually from God, of the "influx of light and strength which He imparts in answer to prayer," of the "fruits of goodness produced by God's constant operation on the human mind," of "the silent influences of his Providence and Spirit on the heart, suggesting good thoughts, and awakening desires of holiness," he means the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit. So that his doctrine on this subject would seem to be identical with that of the Swedish seer.

XXXV.

REPENTANCE AND REGENERATION.

AT the time Swedenborg wrote, it was the prevailing belief among Christians, that, in consequence of Adam's transgression, all mankind became exposed to "the just wrath of God," and liable therefore to eternal damnation; and that this liability may be removed through faith in the atoning blood of Christ; in consequence of which faith, it was held, "that God the Father imparts to the believer the righteousness of his Son, and then declares him, while yet unconscious of any sin, righteous, renewed and holy, and thus clothes him in a robe washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." And it was believed that this act of saving faith, preceded by contrition and followed by repentance and regeneration, was an instantaneous work; so that the vilest sinner might, through faith in the great atoning sacrifice, be changed in a moment into a spotless saint, and fitted for the realms of bliss, — thus making both repentance and regeneration, or man's spiritual renovation, instantaneous acts.

All this is rejected by Swedenborg, and declared to be alike untrue, unscriptural and pernicious. He says (and this teaching is many times repeated in

his writings) that regeneration, or man's inward renewal in the spirit and temper of his mind, is not an instantaneous, but a gradual and progressive work — as gradual as the growth from infancy to manhood, or as the progress from ignorance to intelligence. He says that our selfish and evil proclivities cannot be suddenly overcome, nor an angelic or Christ-like character suddenly formed; that we advance gradually in the work of subduing our evil inclinations, regarding their indulgence as a sin against God, and shunning them one by one as they arise or come under our observation; and so casting them out "by little and little," as the Israelites drove out the inhabitants from the land of Canaan.

So that regeneration, or the formation of the new man — the development of the new and heavenly life in the soul — is as gradual and as strictly in accordance with the laws of divine order, as the formation of man's natural body, or as the development of a stalk of grain from its implanted seed. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Accordingly Swedenborg says: —

"Man [in his unregenerate state] loves himself more than the Lord, and the world more than heaven; yet the life of heaven consists in loving the Lord above all things and his neighbor as himself. Hence it is evident that his former [or natural] life must be altogether destroyed, that is,

evils and falsities must be removed, in order that the new life which is the life of heaven, may be implanted. This cannot by any means be done quickly; for every evil being inrooted with its falsity, is connected with all evils and their falsities; and such evils and falsities are innumerable, and their connexion is so manifold that it cannot be comprehended even by the angels, but only by the Lord. Hence it is evident that the life of hell in man cannot be suddenly destroyed, for if it were he would altogether expire; nor can the life of heaven be suddenly implanted, for if it were he would also expire. There are thousands and thousands of arcana, scarcely a single one of which is known to man, whereby a man is led of the Lord from the life of hell to the life of heaven. . . . Since man knows scarcely anything of these arcana, therefore many have fallen into errors about his liberation from evils and falsities, or about the remission of sins, believing that the life of hell in him can be changed into the life of heaven in a moment through mercy." (A. C., n. 9336. See also n. 4353, 9334, '37.)

And of repentance he says, "it is not the mere lip-confession of being a sinner," which may be made "by a wicked person, and even by a devil;" but to be genuine and of any value, "it should be actual and not merely verbal;" that is, there must

be an actual turning away from evils, and a shunning of them as sins. To the question, "How ought a man to repent," he says: —

"The reply is, Actually: That is to say, he must examine himself, recognize and acknowledge his sins, supplicate the Lord, and begin a new life... But why should a man examine himself, except that he may recognize his sins? And why should he recognize his sins, except that he may acknowledge that they are in him? And wherefore these three things, except that he may confess his sins before the Lord, supplicate aid, and then begin a new life — which is the end sought? This is actual repentance." (T. C. R., n. 530.)

And not only must we refrain from the outward commission of evil, but from the very thought of it — from every evil intention.

"For a man to examine not only the actions of his life but likewise the intentions of his will, is true repentance, because the understanding and will perform the actions... He may repent of evils which he has done in the body, and still do evil in thought and will,— which is like cutting off the trunk of an evil tree and leaving the root in the ground, from which the same evil tree grows up again and spreads forth its branches. But when the root also is torn up, it is different; and this is done in man when he examines also the intentions of his will, and removes evil by repentance." (T. C. R., n. 532.)

And Channing teaches precisely the same doctrine on both these subjects, as the following brief extracts clearly show: —

"We repent then and then only, when, seeing a propensity to be evil, we resist it as such, and bring it into subjection to the principle of duty. . . Repentance is a strong purpose to remove everything evil from our character. It excepts no form, mode, degree, of evil. It makes no compromise with sin, but wages against it an unsparing and exterminating war. . . To repent is to try to perform our whole duty, to mark every known departure from it, and to aim at universal rectitude of heart and life.

"Some, when they speak of repentance, mean little more than that they have grieved for transgression. Now sorrow is, I admit, an entrance-way to repentance, a preparation for it, a means to it; but it is not the grace itself. The truth is, we must toil and struggle, as well as lament; and grief does no good any farther than it leads to a habit of watchfulness, and of opposition to the first motion of guilty desire.

"Some, indeed, tell us that repentance is a work done immediately for us by God, that we are transformed, regenerated, renewed by a sudden and resistless agency of the Divine Spirit. But why, then, are we called to repent and renew ourselves? Why is penitence assigned as a duty, and the neglect of it punished as a crime? True, it is God who gives

repentance. All good comes from Him, whether spiritual or natural; but it comes through the powers which He bestows, and through his blessing on the faithful use of them. The character is never changed in a moment, or without our own activity." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 7, 8, 9.)

XXXVI.

TRUE RELIGION.

NO single subject, perhaps, has been more misunderstood, even by professing Christians, than the subject of Religion. Some have supposed it to consist in oral prayers and penitential sighs and psalms; others, in certain rites and ceremonies, solemnly and reverently performed at stated times; others, in fastings, flagellations, and other bodily sufferings, either self-inflicted or imposed by ecclesiastical authority; others, in indiscriminate almsgiving and liberal endowments of religious institutions; others, in a certain system of religious belief, and a certain form of religious worship; others, in retiring from the world, renouncing all its pleasures, cares and pursuits, and giving one's self up to a ceaseless round of solemn services. But the most sensible and satisfactory definition of it that we have ever met with, and one which the most enlightened

Christians of our times are gradually coming to accept, is that given by Swedenborg in these few words: —

"All religion has relation to life; and the life of religion is to do good." (D. L., n. 1.)

And throughout his writings the Swedish sage teaches that the true religion — while not rejecting forms and ordinances and external worship, but using them as a means of its own development — consists essentially in *righteousness of life*, in doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God. He insists that the truly religious life is the life of God in the soul of man, manifesting itself in all the deeds and relations of life; and that this life is best developed, not in cloisters or away from the business and turmoil of the world, but in the midst of its cares, duties, temptations and trials; that we become more and more religious, in the true sense of this word, in the degree that we look to the Lord for light and guidance, and try to perform all our duties honestly and well as He would have us; — try to carry his wise, righteous and loving spirit into all the common labors and trials and transactions of life. Performing our common every-day duties in a faithful, honest, conscientious manner, and in the spirit of neighborly love, is living a religious life. From this it may be seen what the true religion is, according to this writer.

Swedenborg tells us some things that he learned

from the angels on this subject. Take, for example, the following: —

"I have been permitted to converse with some in the other life, who had withdrawn themselves from the business of the world, that they might live a pious and holy life; and with others also who had afflicted themselves in various ways, because they imagined that this was to renounce the world and to subdue the concupiscences of the flesh. But the greater portion of these, — having by such austerities contracted a sorrowful life, and removed themselves from the life of charity, which can only be lived in the world, — cannot be associated with angels, because the life of the angels is one of gladness resulting from bliss, and consists in performing acts of goodness, which are works of charity.

"Besides, they who have led a life withdrawn from worldly affairs, are possessed with the idea of their own merit, and are thence continually desirous of being admitted into heaven, and think of heavenly joy as a reward, being totally ignorant of what heavenly joy is. And when they are admitted among the angels, and to a perception of their joy which is without the thought of merit, and consists in active duties and services openly performed, and in the blessedness arising from the good which they thereby promote, they are astonished like persons who witness things altogether foreign to their expectation. And because they are not receptible of

that joy, they depart and associate with spirits like themselves, who have lived a similar life in the world. . .

"These statements are made in order that it may be known, that the life which leads to heaven is not a life of retirement from the world, but of action in the world; and that a life of piety, without a life of charity, — which can only be acquired in the world, — does not lead to heaven, but a life of charity does; and this consists in acting sincerely and justly in every occupation, in every transaction, and in every work, from an interior and thus from a heavenly origin; and such origin is inherent in such a life, when a man acts sincerely and justly because it is accccrding to the divine laws.

"Such a life is not difficult; but a life of piety separate from a life of charity, is difficult; yet this life leads away from heaven, as much as it is believed to lead to it." (H. H. 535.)

"The most essential worship of the Lord consists in the life of charity, but not in a life of piety without this. A life of piety without the life of charity, is to be willing to consult one's self alone, not the neighbor; but a life of piety with the life of charity, is to be willing to consult one's self for the sake of the neighbor. The former life is grounded in love toward self; but the latter in love toward the neighbor." (A. C., n. 8254.)

And what was Channing's view of this subject? What did he believe the true religion to consist in? Take, for illustration, the following passage, and see how perfectly his idea agrees with Swedenborg's.

"I wish you to feel that religion, love to God, is in no way at war with our relations and present state. It does not take us out of the world. It is not inconsistent with any of the useful pursuits of life, but unites them with itself, and makes them oblations to God. He who feels the true influence of religion does not relinquish his labor. On the contrary, he becomes more industrious, labors with more cheerfulness, is more contented with his lot, however difficult. Religion furnishes motives which give to existence a dignity and animation such as he was unconscious of before. Neither does he forsake society. On the contrary, his social character is improved. Taught by God's goodness, he looks round on his fellow-beings with new tenderness. A more benignant smile lights up his countenance at sight of human virtue and happiness, a more frequent pain is felt at sight of human guilt and misery. He is more conscientious, more just in his transactions, more faithful in all his relations, milder in his temper, and more active in his charity. Neither does he give up all his enjoyments. His religion cuts off no innocent and healthy stream of pleasure. It heightens pleasure, by making it more rational, more pure, more equable, more consistent

with all the duties of life. This, my friends, is the nature and influence of true religion.

"In one word, religion is designed to refine and improve our whole nature, to make us better in every condition, to awaken all our faculties, to render us active, intelligent, generous, pure, temperate, meek, contented and serene. And it is genuine just so far, and no farther, as these effects are produced. This influence of religion over the whole life is the proper standard by which it should be measured." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 14.)

XXXVII.

HAPPINESS.

ACCORDING to Swedenborg's teachings, happiness comes not from without; nor does it depend on the amount of our material or intellectual possessions, nor on the character of our surroundings, —though he often tells us, that every one's surroundings in the great Hereafter are determined by the quality of his inner life, being the perfect reflection or pictorial representation of that life. It is not something that the Lord imparts or that He *can* impart arbitrarily to whomsoever He pleases. Although it all comes from Him, and is a consequence of the influx and operation of his own unperverted

life in the soul, yet its enjoyment depends wholly on ourselves. Its realization is subject to fixed and unalterable conditions, as the influx of the Divine life unperverted is subject to conditions; and unless these conditions are freely accepted and complied with, it is not in the power of God Himself to communicate happiness to a single soul.

These conditions are, the inward and hearty acknowledgment of God as the source of life and all its joys, and a cheerful coöperation with Him in his perpetual effort to overcome our selfish and evil propensities and subject all our inclinations to his benign control; a resolute purpose of obedience (carried into daily practice) to all the laws of our spiritual life, which have been revealed or in any way made known to us; the cultivation and harmonious development of all the faculties of the soul, taking care always to keep the lower in due subjection and subordination to the higher; and especially the cultivation and development of that divinest of all human qualities, the disinterested love of others,—the love of rendering some service or doing something useful to human society. The love of use is one of the purest and noblest loves of heaven; and the angels (says the great seer) derive their chief happiness from the exercise of this love.

Happiness, then, according to this teaching, comes as the sure consequence of that inward soul-culture which brings all the faculties into harmonious act-

ivity, and enthrones the love of the Lord and the neighbor, or the disinterested love of use, as supreme above all the rest. Whoever, therefore, is actively engaged in the performance of the highest use of which he is capable, and seeks to perform that use in an honest and faithful manner, with little or no thought of a personal recompense, is by such activity growing to be like the angels. He is developing in himself the noblest human love — the unselfish love of use, — from the active exercise of which comes the purest human bliss.

This is a condensed statement of Swedenborg's doctrine on this subject. Whether or not it be true, and what are its obvious practical tendencies, the reader is left to judge for himself.

The following passages are sufficient to confirm what we have here said: —

"The Lord's love is the love of communicating all that He has to all his creatures, for He wills the happiness of all. And a similar love is in each of those who love Him, because the Lord is in them. Hence there is with the angels a mutual communication of their delights to each other. . .

"All the delights of heaven are conjoined with uses and inherent in them, because uses are the goods of love and charity in which the angels are. Therefore every one has delights corresponding in quality with his uses, and in degree with his affection for use.

"Certain spirits, from an opinion conceived in the world, believed heavenly happiness to consist in an idle life, and in being served by others. But they were told that happiness by no means consists in mere rest from employment, because every one would then desire that others' happiness should be his own. And if every one had this desire, none would be happy. Such a life would not be active but indolent, and through indolence the faculties would become torpid; when yet they might know that without an active life there can be no happiness; and that cessation from employment is only for the sake of recreation, that one may return with greater alacrity to the active business of his life.

"It was afterwards shown by numerous evidences, that angelic life consists in performing the good works of charity, which are uses; and that the angels find all their happiness in use, from use and according to use. They who entertained the idea that heavenly joy consisted in living an idle life, and in breathing eternal delight without employment, were allowed to perceive the nature of such a life, in order to make them ashamed. And it was found to be extremely sad, and that after a short time — all joy having thus departed — they felt only disgust and loathing for it." (H. H., n. 399, 402, '3.)

And the following from Channing shows how exactly his idea of the nature and conditions of

human happiness coincides with that of Swedenborg.

"Force of moral purpose makes us happy, Happiness does not consist, as men are too apt to imagine, in passive enjoyments. It is found in the strenuous use of our best affections. We enjoy most in putting forth our whole nature, in being fully alive to all scenes and relations, and especially in preserving our noblest faculties in healthy and efficient activity. There is a constant satisfaction attending the vigorous exercise of conscience, while a feeble operation of the moral principle, which shows us what is right but gives no strength to perform it, is a source of constant misery. There is an exhilaration, a hope, a joy, springing up within us when we *will* with power what we see to be good, when we are conscious of treading under foot the low principles and interests which would part us from God and duty,. when we sacrifice firmly and unreservedly selfish desires or the world's favor to the claims of Christian rectitude. Moral energy inspires an unconquerable resolution, and fills us with a rare delight.

"I cannot conceive a more obvious truth than this, that it is not the circumstances which surround a man, but the thoughts and feelings which are most familiar to his mind, on which his satisfaction depends. The true question as to happiness is not 'Where am I? In what state or rank do I exist?'

but 'To what end is my mind directed? What objects have acquired the control of my affections?' . . .

"Life is designed to form and prove our characters, to call forth our powers, to bring our virtues into acts, to put to the test our moral and religious principles, and thus to prepare us for higher states of being. *Happiness is God's end;* but it is future, not immediate, happiness, — a happiness for which the foundation is to be laid in present improvement, which we are to earn by exertion, self-denial, and the voluntary exercise and habitual cultivation of the best affections of which our nature is capable." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 34, '5.)

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XXXVIII.

DEFINITE VIEWS OF THE HEREAFTER.

THUS far, in comparing the beliefs and teachings of the two writers whose names stand coupled on every other page, I have confined myself chiefly to the domain of Theology — moral, revealed and speculative. And on nearly forty different subjects — most of them, too, subjects of profound moment and vital interest to every serious and reflecting mind — we have seen that their teachings are substantially the same. However different their phraseology, it cannot be denied that the agreement in their thoughts or ideas is so close as to fully justify the assertion that they are identical. Nor are they the generally accepted beliefs and teachings of Christians a hundred years ago — no, nor of many of the most popular churches even in our own day; though they are doubtless held now by thousands of the more advanced thinkers in every denomination. They are views toward which the deep current of religious thought to-day is obvi-

ously tending, and which many of the best minds in nearly all the churches have already reached. This fact adds greatly to the interest of our subject, and makes the many agreements I have pointed out the more remarkable, and to reflecting minds the more instructive — or significant.

And when we come to a domain of thought where we should least expect any agreement between these writers — I mean the life beyond the grave — the similarity in their teachings is not a whit less striking than upon the subjects already considered. This is the more remarkable and unexpected, because of the different sources of their information, or the different grounds on which they rest the instruction they have to impart.

Swedenborg simply reports what he learned about the spiritual world "from things heard and seen" there. He claims to have been intromitted into that world by the opening of his spiritual senses, and to write about it, therefore, as a faithful eye- and ear-witness; just as a traveller in foreign lands records what he sees and learns of the people and countries he visits. But Channing gives us merely the conclusions of his judgment based on the teachings of Scripture, and upon the constitution and known laws of the human soul; "for its future life," he reasonably concludes, "must correspond to the soul's great laws and essential powers." If the soul be immortal, he argues, then its constitu-

tion and laws must remain essentially the same after its release from the incumbrance of the flesh.

I know that Swedenborg's claim to have enjoyed open and visible intercourse with spirits in the manner and to the extent alleged, is discredited by multitudes of intelligent and honest people,— but *by none*, I believe, *who have ever studied his pneumatology enough to thoroughly master or comprehend it.* And he foresaw that it would be discredited — that it would encounter the derision of some, the disbelief of more, and be set down by not a few as the impudent claim of an impostor or the hallucination of a fanatic. And how well have facts justified his expectation! But the way in which his extraordinary claim would be received or treated was a matter of little concern to him. He says: —

"Many, I am well aware, will insist that it is impossible for any one to converse with spirits and angels during his life in the body; many, that such intercourse must be mere fancy and illusion; some, that I have invented such relations in order to gain credit; while others will make other objections. To all such objections, however, I am quite indifferent; for I have seen, have heard, and have had sensible experience of what I am about to declare." (A. C., n. 68.)

And he tells us why this intercourse was permitted him. It was, that the tide of skepticism in regard to the reality of a spiritual world, might be

arrested; that men's faith in immortality might be strengthened and confirmed; that the nature of both heaven and hell might be clearly understood; and that souls might be encouraged and helped on their heavenward way, by clearer, more definite and vivid conceptions of the Future Life. Referring to the prevalent ignorance among Christians concerning the spiritual world, he says: —

"The angels heartily rejoice that it has pleased the Lord at this time to reveal to mankind many things respecting heaven and hell; and thereby to dispel, as far as possible, the darkness which is every day increasing."

And again: —

"Lest, therefore, from ignorance of the existence of a spiritual world, and the doubts respecting the reality of heaven and hell which result from such ignorance, men should be infatuated to such a degree as to become materialists and atheists, it has pleased the Lord to open my spiritual sight, and, as to my spirit, to elevate me into heaven and let me down into hell, and exhibit to my view the nature of both." (*Influx*, n. 3.)

And, as he often tells us, this seeing the objects and spirits of the other world occurred in states of full wakefulness, and was as vivid as the sight of men and objects in this world. Now, he either had this experience and did actually see and converse with spirits as man with man; or he was under a

strange hallucination for nearly thirty consecutive years — all this time mistaking the things of his imagination for objective realities; or he acted the part of a villanous impostor — and this, too, without any conceivable motive.

But not many intelligent people nowadays accept this latter theory. And do the passages we have already quoted from his writings, read like the teachings of one who was unable to distinguish facts from fancies? — of one who knew not the difference between subjective states and objective realities? — of one who could not even tell the difference between his own lively fancies and the sights and sounds that he actually saw and heard? Yet this second theory is the one generally received by the philosophers (?) and scientists (?) and reputed sages of our times!

Then there is another difficulty which this second theory has to encounter, which is this: That many — nearly all, in fact — of this more than half crazy man's (for such he certainly was, according to the theory) imaginings about heaven, are found, as we shall see, to be identically the same as the sober conclusions on the same subject, that were reached by the cool, thoughtful, rational, sober-minded Channing. Where in all history shall we find such a marvelous similarity between the fancies of a dreamer or monomaniac, and the conclusions of calm, unimpassioned, unclouded reason? Is not the difficulty

here presented sufficiently great to suggest the *possibility*, at least, of some defect or inadequacy in the theory?

We sometimes hear it said that any disclosures concerning the other world could be of no practical value if true; that we have quite enough to do while in the flesh, to attend to the affairs of this world; that knowledge of the other would not help us in the performance of our duties here, — would not strengthen our faith, enlarge our charity, exalt our aspirations or increase our usefulness.

Not so thought the pure-hearted and broad-minded Channing. He lamented the weakness of men's faith in Immortality. He mourned over the prevailing skepticism in regard to the great Hereafter. He believed that this skepticism could best be removed by giving people more definite, rational and vivid conceptions of the life beyond; and that such instruction would be no hindrance but a help to our improvement as well as usefulness on earth; just as a belief in the soul, and a knowledge of its constitution and laws, help rather than hinder us in the proper care of our bodies. Therefore he endeavored to bring the doctrine of a Future Life to bear more powerfully on the mind, to become more real and effectual.

"This faith [in immortality]," he says, "is lamentably weak in the multitude of men. To multitudes, Heaven is almost a world of fancy. It wants sub-

stance. The idea of a world in which beings exist without these gross bodies, exist as pure spirits, or clothed with refined and spiritual frames, strikes them as a fiction. What cannot be seen or touched, appears unreal. This is mournful, but not wonderful; for how can men who immerse themselves in the body and its interests, and cultivate no acquaintance with their own souls and spiritual powers, comprehend a higher, spiritual life? . . . This skepticism as to things spiritual and celestial, is as irrational and unphilosophical as it is degrading." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 219.)

And what is the method he suggests for overcoming this skepticism, and bringing the doctrine of a future life home to men's minds as a grand and inspiring reality? It is a little remarkable that it should be identically the method that Providence had anticipated and amply provided, without men's seeking, three-quarters of a century before.

"This method," he says, "is to seek some clearer, more definite conception of the future state. That world seems less real, for want of some distinctness in its features. We should all believe it more firmly if we conceived of it more vividly. It seems unsubstantial from its vagueness and dimness. . . Perhaps the spiritual world never becomes so near and real to us, as when we follow into it dear friends, and sympathize with them in the improvements and enjoyments of that blessed life. Do not say that

there is danger here of substituting imagination for Truth. There is no danger if we confine ourselves to the spiritual views of Heaven given us in the New Testament, and interpret these by the principles and powers of our own souls. To me the subject is too dear and sacred to allow me to indulge myself in dreams. I want reality; I want truth; and this I find in God's Word and in the human soul." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 220, '21.)

And what are some of the things about Heaven which this great thinker found "in God's Word and in the human soul?" It will interest every serious mind to consider them, and especially to compare them with the testimony in relation to the same subjects, given by the Swedish seer *seventy-six years* before; — testimony, be it remembered, which he gives professedly as a careful observer, an honest eye- and ear-witness of life beyond the grave.

XXXIX.

CONNECTION OF THE NATURAL WITH THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

THERE are few things of which Swedenborg speaks oftener or more familiarly than of the intimate connection existing between the natural and the spiritual worlds, or between good men on earth and angels in heaven. As to our spirits, he says, we are in the spiritual world now and always, though all unconscious of the fact. Invisible companions are in close association with us, hourly and strongly operating upon our thoughts and feelings, our ends and aims, influencing us for good or for evil, according to our own internal leanings, that is, according to our willingness to yield to the voice of duty and the promptings of unselfish love, or to the suggestions of selfishness and worldly greed. Every human soul is in near and organic relation with other souls, most of whom have laid aside their fleshly covering and are no longer visible to the eye of sense; for the natural eye can see only natural objects — objects that belong to the realm of nature. But we may know in general the character of our invisible associates by attending carefully to the motives which we allow to govern us in the ordinary intercourse of daily life — to our ruling

purposes of action; our ends and aims. If these are selfish, base and grovelling, such is the character of our associate spirits; but if just and righteous and unselfish, so are our invisible companions; — we walk in company with angels and inhale their inspiring breath, while yet we tabernacle in the flesh.

"There are continually associated with man," says Swedenborg, "angels and spirits — angels from heaven and spirits from hell. . . He cannot see them except by the eye of his internal man, which is suited to the view of such objects. But for several reasons the sight of this eye is not opened in man during his abode in the [natural] world." (A. C., n. 5848, '9.)

"In general the character of the spirits associated with a man is according to the character of the man. If he is covetous, the spirits are covetous; if haughty, the spirits are haughty; if desirous of revenge, so are the spirits; if deceitful, the spirits are of like character. An [evil] man attaches to himself spirits from hell according to his life. The hells are most exactly distinguished according to the lusts of evil and all the differences thereof. Hence it is impossible to suppose a case wherein spirits similar to the man who is in evil, may not be called forth and adjoined to him." (Ibid., n. 5851.)

"The angels flow into the ends which a man regards, and so, through the ends, into those things which follow from them. They also flow-in through

good spirits into those things in man, which are goods of life and truths of faith, and by these they withdraw him as much as possible from evils and falsities. This influx is tacit and imperceptible to men, but still operative in a hidden manner, and effective principally of the turning from evil ends and the insinuation of good ones; but so far as they are unable to effect this, they remove themselves and flow-in more remotely, and in this case the evil spirits approach nearer; for the angels cannot be present in evil ends, that is, in the loves of self and the world, except remotely." (A. C., n. 5854.)

"The Lord's kingdom in the earths is the church, which acts in unity with his kingdom in the heavens." (A. C., 9276.) "The societies which constitute it are scattered through the whole world, and consist of those who are principled in love to Him and in charity towards the neighbor; but these scattered societies are collected by the Lord that they also may represent one man, as do the societies in heaven. These societies are not only within the church [where the Word is], but outside of it also, and together are called the Lord's church scattered and collected from the good in the whole world, which is also called a communion. This communion or church is the Lord's kingdom on earth conjoined to his kingdom in the heavens, and thus conjoined to Himself." (A. C., n. 7396.)

And Channing, too, had a clear perception of this same truth. He saw that there is a close and vital union between spirits in the other world and men in this world — between Christians in heaven and Christians on earth; — that they are to be thought of as constituting one and the same Body. He saw that "the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant are One Church;" and that, "by unity of soul with Christ's Church" here below, "we are admitted into a real Communion of Saints" in the world above — a communion "which will gain strength and largeness as we and they advance towards celestial excellence." In proof of this, I cite the following: —

"Christ has ONE CHURCH, not many churches. All Christians are comprehended in One Community. However scattered, separated and divided, — in their fellowship with One Head, in their participation of One Faith and Spirit, they are attracted by a combining principle, — which, though counteracted now, can never be destroyed. . .

"Now if all Christians constitute One Community only, then it is implied, not merely that Christians of the different denominations which are scattered through the world, are nearly connected with one another here below, but that Christians on Earth and Christians in Heaven are livingly bound in fellowship. Being equally united to Christ, these two classes are necessarily comprehended in that One Body, which is quickened by the One Spirit of

adoption that animates the whole vast Family of the Children of God. Consequently they sustain most intimate relations with one another, instantly and everywhere.

"Christians in heaven look with new clearness of spiritual vision into the depth of this Love of Christ 'which passeth knowledge,' until they too become 'filled with the fulness of God.' And can we imagine that, embosomed within this Divine Compassion which is always descending from Heaven to earth, and living in the midst of the warm and attractive beams of this all-embracing Charity, they can shake off concern for the Church below? Through closer adherence to the Head, can they become severed from the members who are so dear and near to Him as to be called 'flesh of his flesh'?

"Death cannot take him [the true Christian] out of this Church [universal], nor in the least degree loosen his connexions with it. On the contrary, he goes to join the triumphant, purified, blessed portion of this Community, among whom his affections for his militant brethren here, instead of being extinguished, will gain new fervor.

"My friends, I should not have insisted so long upon this Communion between Christians in Heaven and Christians on earth, did I not think this truth an eminently practical one. To many no lessons seem practical, except the minute inculcation of common duties. But, in fact, the most practical

views in religion are those which awaken the loftiest sentiments and touch the noblest springs of action. And the subject now discussed is peculiarly fitted to give life and energy to our convictions of the Spiritual World, and to lift our minds above the sordid mood into which they are so prone to sink.

"Whatever goes beyond our present experience, passes with many for visionary and romantic. The Spiritual World is to them a void. And the idea of higher orders of beings [that is, of human beings with wisdom and love received and operative in a higher degree than with us], though so plainly revealed in Scripture, and attested by all traditions, gains from them merely a half skeptical assent. But if Revelation be worthy of any credit, the intercourse between Heaven and Earth is most close and constant. Jesus Christ, Risen and Glorified, — who once lived here below, — now *lives* on high, not as an unconcerned Spectator, but as a mighty Agent for the good of the whole human race. Angels commissioned by his boundless love, He sends forth to minister to all heirs of salvation. . . And to the mind that can shake off the clogs of earth and freely exercise its spiritual powers, these views will appear to be as sober and rational as they are joyful and exalting." (*The Perfect Life*, pp. 293, '4, '9, 308, '9.)

At the time Swedenborg wrote all faith in the reality of a spiritual world was well-nigh extin-

guished throughout Christendom. People had for so many centuries been taught to believe that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection means the resuscitation of the material body at some distant and indefinite future, that they had come to think of the material realm as the only substantial realm, and of the material body, therefore, as indispensable to the completeness if not to the existence of a human being.

But the great seer lifts the veil, and discloses a world beyond the grave as much more real and substantial as it is more wonderful and populous than this world of matter. He reveals a truly human world, — a world, that is, peopled with human beings who began existence on this lower plane, and are still animated by human thoughts, feelings, desires and aspirations, touched by human sympathies, occupied with human interests, and capable of human enjoyment and human suffering.

And such was evidently Channing's conception of the world beyond. The heaven he thought of was as perfectly human in all respects, as is the heaven that Swedenborg has so fully described. Its interests and occupations and associations and sources of enjoyment, were all strictly human. This is plain from the passages I shall quote in the chapters following.

And since no remarks of my own can tend much towards the accomplishment of the main object had

in view in the preparation of the present work, I propose, therefore, for the sake of brevity, to remain silent in the subsequent chapters of this division, and to allow the writers alone, whose views I am comparing, to speak each for himself: — Only reminding the reader here of the interesting fact already mentioned, that, while Swedenborg derived his information respecting the spiritual realm he tells us of, from open intercourse with that realm — from "things heard and seen" when his spiritual senses were opened — Channing derived his from reason, experience, the Sacred Scripture, and the known laws and constitution of the human soul. Agreeing information drawn from such independent sources, while it adds greatly to the strength of the testimony, cannot fail to add considerably also to the interest of the subject.

XL.

MAN THE GERM OF THE FUTURE ANGEL.

SWEDENBORG.—"Men who are principled in love to the Lord and charity towards their neighbor during their abode in the world, have with and in themselves angelic intelligence and wisdom, but hidden in the inmosts of their interior memory; which intelligence and wisdom cannot

possibly make itself manifest to them until they have put off things corporeal." (A. C., n. 2494.)

"That angels are from the human race may be evident from this, that angelic minds and human minds are similar. Both enjoy the faculty of understanding, perceiving and willing. Both are formed to receive heaven; for the human as well as the angelic mind is capable of wisdom, but it does not become so wise in the world because it is in an earthly body, and in this the spiritual mind thinks naturally. But it is otherwise when released from its connection with this body; then it no longer thinks naturally but spiritually; and when it thinks spiritually, it thinks things incomprehensible and ineffable to the natural man; thus it becomes wise as an angel. Hence it may be seen that the internal of man, which is called his spirit, is, in its essence, an angel." (H. H., n. 314.)

"An angel also denotes the Divine of the Lord with the men who receive it; for they who are in the good of love and in the truths of faith from the Lord, become angels after death; and they who become angels are angels as to their interiors even while living in the world. Hence it is that John the Baptist is called an angel [messenger] in the Word, Luke vii. 27." (A. C., n. 10,527.)

CHANNING.—"Jesus Christ thought nothing worthy of his notice but man's soul; and the whole tone

of his Gospel is, that the soul is capable of all that is great and excellent, that it may become the image of God, that it may ascend to the glory and purity of angels. It is constantly his doctrine that man is appointed to join the society of heaven, and that he will there shine as the sun, that he will exchange his present imperfection for spotless purity. As in the child we view the future man, so in man we are taught by the Gospel to view the germ of the future angel. We are taught that there is no height of excellence in the universe to which the human mind in the progress of eternity may not attain. . . What a splendor is thrown round human nature, when it is thus viewed as the future associate of all that is most excellent in heaven, as the bright reflection of the glorious goodness of the Creator!" (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 48, '9.)

XLI.

WHAT WE CARRY TO THE OTHER WORLD.

SWEDENBORG. — "When a man passes from the natural into the spiritual world, he takes with him all that belongs to him as a man except his terrestrial body, as has been proved to me by much experience. For when he enters the spiritual world, or the life after death, he is in a body as he

was in the natural world, and to all appearance in the same body. He sees as before; he hears and speaks as before; and when he is touched he feels as before. He also longs, desires, wishes, thinks, reflects, is affected, loves and wills as before. . .

"In a word, when man passes from one life into the other, or from one world into the other, it is just as if he passed from one place to another; and he carries with him all things which he possessed in himself as a man, so that it cannot be said that after death — which is only the death of the terrestrial body,— he has lost anything that really belonged to him. . . Still, however, the difference between a man's life in the spiritual and his life in the natural world, is great, both in respect to the external senses and their affections and the internal senses and their affections." (H. H., n. 461, '2.)

CHANNING.—"The true view of heaven which the Scriptures give,—that which reason sanctions, and that which we can most powerfully realize, is, that it will not essentially change, but rather improve, our nature. We shall be the same beings as on earth; we shall retain our present faculties, our present affections, our love of knowledge, love of beauty, love of action, love of approbation, our sympathy, gratitude, and pleasure in success. We shall probably, too, have bodies not very different from what we now have." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 22.)

XLII.

OUR SENSES IN THE HEREAFTER.

SWEDENBORG.—"This I can positively affirm, that a spirit has more exquisite sight and also more exquisite hearing than a man in the body; and what will seem surprising, a more exquisite sense of smell, and especially of touch; for spirits see, hear and touch each other. He who believes in a life after death might also infer this from the consideration, that no life is possible without sense, and that the nature or quality of the sense is according to the nature of the life; yea, that the intellectual principle is nothing but an exquisite sense of interior things." (A. C., n. 4622.)

"The senses of those in heaven are far more acute than they were in the world; that is, they see and hear more perfectly and also think more wisely; for they see by the light of heaven which exceeds by many degrees the light of this world; and they hear by a spiritual atmosphere which also surpasses by many degrees the atmosphere of the earth. The difference between these external senses is like the difference between a clear sky and a dark mist, or between the light of noon-day and the shade of evening. . . The external sight of the angels also corresponds to their internal sight, or their under-

standing; for with them one sight flows into the other, and they act as one. Hence their wonderful acuteness of vision. In like manner also their hearing corresponds to their perception which is both of the understanding and the will." (H. H., n. 462.)

CHANNING.—"It is possible that the distance of heaven lies wholly in the veil of flesh, which we now want power to penetrate. A new sense, a new eye, might show the spiritual world compassing us on every side. . . In an important sense they [the inhabitants of heaven] may be present; for what do we mean by presence? Am I not present to those of you who are beyond the reach of my arm, but whom I distinctly see? And is it at all inconsistent with our knowledge of nature, to suppose that those in heaven, whatever be their abode, may have spiritual senses,— organs, by which they may discern the remote as clearly as we do the near?" (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 228.)

XLIII.

RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS IN THE OTHER LIFE.

SWEDENBORG.—"The first state of man after death is similar to his state in the world, because then he is in externals. He has also a similar face, similar speech, and a similar mind, therefore a similar moral and civil life... Thus one life is continued into the other, and death is only the passage from one to the other... Hence it is that all, when they first come into the other life, are recognized by their friends, relations, and those with whom they were in any way acquainted; and that they also converse together, and afterwards associate according to their friendship in the world. I have often heard that those who came from the world rejoiced at seeing their friends again, and that their friends in turn rejoiced that they had come to them. It is a common occurrence that one married partner meets the other, and they mutually congratulate each other; they also remain together for a time, longer or shorter according to the delight that had attended their dwelling together in the world. [But if there was no internal or spiritual union, a disagreement and aversion erelong become manifest, and they mutually separate.]" (H. H., n. 493, '4.)

CHANNING.—"It seems to me accordant with the principles of human nature, to suppose that the departed meet peculiar congratulation from friends who had gone before them to that better world; and especially from all who had in any way given aids to their virtue; from parents who had instilled into them the first lessons of love to God and man; from associates whose examples had won them to goodness, whose faithful counsels deterred them from sin." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 231.)

XLIV.

GLORIFYING GOD IN HEAVEN.

SWEDENBORG.—"There were some who had persuaded themselves that heavenly joy and eternal happiness were a perpetual glorification of God and an endless festival [of oral worship]; for they had believed when in the world that after death they would see God, and that the life of heaven is called a perpetual sabbath because of the worship of God there."

[But after an experience which convinced them of their error, and prepared them to receive the true view, they were thus instructed by the angels]:—

"You do not know what glorifying God means. It means to bring forth the fruits of love; that is, to

perform faithfully, sincerely and diligently the work of one's office; for this is from the love of God and the neighbor, and is the bond and good of society. By this God is glorified, and then by worship at stated times. Have you not read these words of the Lord? 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.' John xv. 8." (T. C. R., n. 738. Also H. H., n. 404.)

CHANNING. — "Heaven is often described as a place where eternity will be spent in immediate acts of Divine worship. This error arises from a too literal and narrow interpretation of passages in Scripture. Their true meaning is, that at all times and in all places spirits in heaven will possess that sensibility to God which places of worship are particularly designed to promote... This spirit of devotion which we ought to cherish on earth, will indeed be the habit of heaven; but its exercise will be consistent with the greatest variety of scenes and employments, and very unlike that wearisome monotony of an endless round of religious services which some seem to anticipate." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 18, 19)

XLV.

MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

SWEDENBORG. — "Man does not know that he is governed of the Lord by means of angels and spirits, and that there are with every individual at least two spirits and two angels. By the spirits he has communication with the world of spirits, and by the angels with heaven. . .

"While he remains unregenerate, evil spirits are with him, dominating him in such a manner that the angels, notwithstanding they are present, are able to do scarcely more than prevent his plunging into the lowest depths of mischief, and incline him to some sort of good, which they effect by making his natural inclinations in some degree subservient to good, and the fallacies of his senses to truth. Evil spirits then have dominion over him, and angels only avert their influence.

"When, however, he becomes regenerate, the angels have dominion, and inspire him with what is good and true, infusing at the same time a fear and dread of what is evil and false. The angels, indeed, guide him; but in this they are only ministers of the Lord who alone govern him through their instrumentality and that of spirits. . . The angels themselves likewise

confess that they have no power of their own, but act from the Lord alone." (A. C., n. 50.)

"In general, angels of every society are sent to men, that they may guard them, and withdraw them from evil affections and consequent evil thoughts, and inspire them with good affections so far as they can freely receive them. By means of these affections also they rule the actions or works of men, removing from them evil intentions as far as possible. When angels are with a man, they have, as it were, their dwelling-place in his affections; and they are near him in proportion as he is in good derived from truths; but more remote in proportion as his life is remote from good." (H. H., n. 391. Also A. C., n. 5847–5866, 5976–5993, 8865.)

CHANNING.—"Another view of heaven which seems to me to weaken its interest, is this: — its inhabitants are often described as forming a world by themselves, as having no connection with any other beings. Heaven seems to be considered as a region separated from the rest of the universe. . . But we ought not to conceive thus of the future state of good men. We need not doubt the fact that angels whose home is heaven, visit our earth and bear a part in our transactions." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 20.)

"They [our departed and virtuous friends] love us more than ever, but with a refined and spiritual love. They have now but one wish for us, that we may fit

ourselves to join them in their mansions of benevolence and piety. Their spiritual vision penetrates to our souls. Could we hear their voice, it would not be an utterance of personal attachment, so much as a quickening call to greater effort, to more resolute self-denial, to a wider charity, to a meeker endurance, a more filial obedience to the will of God. . . They are breathing now an atmosphere of divine benevolence. They are charged with a higher mission than when they trod the earth." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 229.)

"In regard to the methods in which Christians in the spiritual world manifest their affections towards Christians on earth, — in regard to the services and assistances they render, — I shall not attempt to speak. . . But there is one office by which the risen and glorified hold an active, beneficent connection with the Church on earth, of which we cannot doubt. . . With the privilege of nearer access to God than they could enjoy in the body, — can we question that in their petitions they remember their tempted brethren who are fighting that fight, of which by experience they know the toil and pain?" (*The Perfect Life*, p. 299.)

"To suppose them forgetful of the world where they began to live, is to make that life worthless, and to blot out a volume of invaluable experience. To think of them as regarding this world with indifference, when it was the scene of their

Master's life, and still bears the impress of his footsteps, when it is associated so intimately with the manifestation of his character, and is the object of his perpetual care, is to make them dead to his glorious design of good." (Ibid., pp. 297, '8.)

XLVI.

NO HOMESICKNESS IN HEAVEN.

SWEDENBORG. — "In heaven no other consanguinities or affinities exist than those of love to the Lord and the neighbor, or what is the same, than those of good. This was made plain to me from the fact, that all the innumerable societies which constitute heaven, are most distinct from each other according to the kinds and degrees of love, and of faith thence derived; also from this, that they know each other there, not from any affinity which had existed in the life of the body, but solely from the principle of good, and of truth thence derived. A father does not know a son or a daughter; nor a brother, a brother or sister; nor indeed a husband, a wife; unless they have been in similar good. They meet, indeed, [and recognize each other] on their first entrance into the other life, but are soon dissociated; for essential good, or love and charity, is what determines every one to his particular society

and enrols him in it. In the society in which he is enrolled, consanguinity commences, and thence proceed the affinities." (A. C., n. 3815.)

"All in heaven are associated according to spiritual affinities which are those of good and truth in their order. Hence it is that the angels who are in similar good and truth, know each other like those on earth who are related by consanguinity and affinity, just as if they had been acquainted from their infancy." (H. H., n. 205.)

"All who are in similar good know each other — although they had never met before — just as men in the world know their kindred, relations and friends. The reason is, that in the other life there are no kindreds, relationships or friendships but such as are spiritual, that is, of love and faith. I have been permitted to see this several times when I have been in the spirit, and thus in company with the angels. On such occasions I have seen some who seemed as if I had known them from infancy; but others seemed wholly unknown to me. They who seemed as if known from infancy, were those who were in a state similar to that of my own spirit; but they who were unknown, were in a state dissimilar to mine." (H. H., n. 46.)

"The goods and truths pertaining to a man mutually love each other, and according to love acknowledge, and thus consociate with, each other. This originates in the angelic societies, where they

love, acknowledge, and consociate with, each other according to the similitudes and proximities of goods. And what is wonderful, they who had never seen each other before, if they are in similar good, when they meet, it is as if they had seen each other from infancy." (A. C., n. 9079.)

CHANNING.—"Our friends who leave us for that world, do not find themselves cast among strangers. No desolate feeling springs up of having exchanged their home for a foreign country. The tenderest accents of human friendship never approached in affectionateness the voice of congratulation, which bids them welcome to their new and everlasting abode. In that world, where minds have surer means of revealing themselves than here, the newly arrived immediately see and feel themselves encompassed with virtue and goodness; and through this insight into the congenial spirits which surround them, intimacies stronger than years can cement on earth, may be created in a moment. . . The closest attachments of this life are cold, distant, stranger-like, compared with theirs." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 231, '2.)

XLVII.

GOVERNMENT IN HEAVEN.

SWEDENBORG.—"In heaven they think and discourse about such things as pertain to wisdom. In their discourse, however, there is nothing of command; for no one desires to lord it over another, or to regard him as a servant, but every one wishes to minister and serve. Hence the nature of the government in heaven is evident. It is described by the Lord in Matthew: 'Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant,' xx. 26, 27. Which precept is obeyed by him who from the heart loves his neighbor, or who is sensible of delight and blessedness in doing good to others regardless of himself." (A. C., n. 5732.)

"The government of mutual love is the only kind of government in heaven; and this is heavenly government. . . All the forms of government there agree in this, that they regard the general good as their end, and in this the good of every individual. This results from the fact, that all in the whole heaven are under the auspices of the Lord, who loves all, and from divine love ordains that every individual shall receive good in proportion as he loves the common good. For so far as any one loves the

community, he loves all the individuals who compose it; and since this is the Lord's love, therefore he is so far loved by the Lord, and good results to himself." (H. H., n. 213, '17.)

CHANNING.—"Jesus will indeed reign in heaven, as he reigned on earth. . . His reign is not the vulgar dominion of this world. It is the empire of a great, God-like, disinterested Being, over minds capable of comprehending and loving Him. In heaven, nothing like what we call government on earth can exist, for government here is founded in human weakness and guilt. The voice of command is never heard among the spirits of the just. Even on earth the most perfect government is that of a family, where parents employ no tone but that of affectionate counsel, where filial affection reads its duty in the mild look, and finds its law and motive in its own pure impulse." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 223.)

XLVIII.

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY OF HEAVEN.

SWEDENBORG.—"The angels do not all dwell together in one place, but are distinguished into larger and smaller societies according to the differences of the good of love and faith in which they are. They who are in similar good form one society... The larger societies consist of myriads of angels, the smaller of some thousands, and the least of some hundreds... Those of like character are brought together as it were spontaneously; for with their like they are as with their own, and at home; but with others they are as with strangers and abroad. When they are with their like, they are also in their freedom, and thence in every delight of life." (H. H., n. 41, 44, 50.)

"In heaven they have the most delightful social gatherings which exhilarate the minds of the angels, enliven their spirits, rejoice their bosoms and afford recreation to their bodies; but these they do not have until after they have performed the uses in their respective offices; for the life and soul of all their pleasures and joys, are from these uses." (T. C. R., n. 734.)

"It is the Lord's will that all good things should be communicable, and that all should be mutually

affected by love, and so be happy. . . So completely do they communicate to one another their affections, thoughts, and also their knowledge, in the other life, that one spirit thinks he knows whatever another does, although he had previously no acquaintance with such subjects. Thus [in heaven] all the attainments of one are communicated to others." (A. C., n. 1388, '90)

CHANNING.—"Another error in the description of heaven, which I think renders it less interesting, is, that the thought of society is thrown too much out of sight. Now human nature is essentially social. It wants objects of affection, companions to whom it may communicate its thoughts and purposes, and with whom it may act and enjoy. Pleasure is tasteless without friendly participation, and every view of heaven excluding this, is unfavorable to an impression of its happiness. We are too apt to think of heaven as a solemn place. It ought to be viewed by us as a place of cheerful society. The countenances of its inhabitants should seem to us irradiated by a benign smile in their intercourse with one another." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 19.) "Perfect social happiness is reserved for a higher stage of existence." (Ibid., p. 36.) "Heaven is the union, the society of spiritual, higher beings." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 228.)

XLIX.

VARIETY IN HEAVEN.

SWEDENBORG.—"Heaven is a whole composed of various parts arranged in the most perfect form; for the heavenly form is the most perfect of all forms. That all perfection results from this harmonious arrangement of parts that are different, is evident from all the beauty, pleasantness and delight which affect both the senses and the mind; for these exist and flow from no other source than from the concert and harmony of many concordant and sympathizing parts."—"Heaven also exists wherever the Lord is acknowledged, believed in and loved. Variety in the worship of Him, arising from the variety of good in different societies, is not injurious but advantageous; for the perfection of heaven results from such variety." (H. H., n. 56.)

"Good in heaven is so manifold and various, that in no single instance is one angel in like good with another; yea, if myriads of myriads should be multiplied to eternity, the good of one would not be like that of another; just as the face of one is never exactly like that of another. Good also in heaven forms the faces of the angels. . .

"There is no instance in nature of one thing being in every respect like another. What makes

good in heaven so various, is truth; for this, when conjoined to good, qualifies it. The reason why truth is so manifold and various that it can communicate so great a variety to good, is, that truths are innumerable, and interior truths are in a form different from that of exterior truths. . . What then may we suppose to be the case arising from thousands and myriads of varieties, as are the varieties of truth!" (A. C., n. 7236.)

"In heaven there are endless varieties; yet they are all arranged into such a form, that together they make a unit; just as with the varieties in the human body, where no member is exactly like another; yet all the various parts are arranged into such a form that they act as a unit, each concurring more or less directly in the action of the other." (A. C., n. 5598.)

CHANNING.—"It seems to be thought, that, because good men are to be perfect hereafter, they will all resemble each other; and hence that diversity of character, of tastes and of habits, which contributes so much to our happiness, is made to give place to a monotonous and unvaried excellence. But all God's works are marked by variety, and to this they owe much of their interest and beauty. Will all this variety be blotted out in heaven?

"No one who reflects that this life is a prepara-

tory state, can doubt that our future character will be a continuation of the present,—that, if we enter heaven, we shall carry with us essentially the same minds which we possess on leaving the world; and thus all the peculiarities of earth which are consistent with goodness, will be transplanted in the future state. The Scriptures teach us that it will be part of the happiness of heaven to meet there the good and excellent of former times,—the patriarchs and prophets and apostles, and other benefactors of mankind. But this happiness would be wholly lost, were men in heaven to lose their peculiar characters, were all to be cast into one mould, were all, in becoming perfect, to become perfectly alike. No,—heaven will not present this unvaried and dull uniformity. The strong lines of character which marked men on earth, we may suppose, will distinguish them hereafter. . . In heaven we shall witness every form of intellectual and moral excellence. Some of its inhabitants will exhibit to us the milder, and others the sublimer virtues. Some will be distinguished by glow of feeling, some by profoundness of thought, some by activity and energy of will. There will be, too, different degrees of the same excellence, and different employments corresponding to the character." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 21, '2.)

L.

HEAVEN A LIFE OF ACTIVE USEFULNESS.

SWEDENBORG.—"Some believe that heaven consists in leading an indolent life, and in being waited upon by others. But they are told that happiness does by no means consist in a state of idleness and rest; for if it did, every one would desire happiness for himself alone, in which case none would possess it. Moreover, in such an inactive, idle life, they would become torpid,—though every one knows that there can be no happiness without activity of life. The angelic life consists in deeds of use and the goods of charity. For nothing is more delightful to the angels than to instruct and guide spirits coming from the world, —to serve mankind by inspiring them with what is good, and by restraining the evil spirits attendant on them from passing their proper bounds,—to raise up the dead to eternal life, and afterwards (if their souls be of such a character as to render it possible) to introduce them into heaven. Angelic happiness, then, is in use, from use, and according to use; or, in other words, it is according to the goods of love and charity. Those who entertained the idea that heavenly joy consists in indolence and in idly quaffing eternal delight, were (for the pur-

pose of making them ashamed of such notions) led to experience the nature of such kind of life. And they perceived that it is most thoroughly sorrowful; for, being destructive of every delight, it soon becomes irksome and disgusting." (A. C., n. 454.)

"Certain learned spirits could form no idea of delight, but rather of slavery, as consisting in the performance of charitable deeds. Nevertheless the angels testified that such good offices are consistent with the most perfect freedom, and attended with inexpressible felicity." (Ibid., n. 456.)

"Every one in heaven is recompensed according to the excellence of the use he performs, and at the same time according to his love of use. No idle person is tolerated there, no slothful vagabond, no indolent boaster of others' studies and labors; but every one must be industrious, skillful, attentive and diligent in his own office and employment, and must place honor and reward not in the first but in the second or third place. According to these conditions there is an influx among the denizens of heaven of the necessary, the useful and the delightful things of life." (D. L., § xii. in Ap. Ex., Vol. VI., p. 353.)

CHANNING.—"We must never think of heaven as a state of inactive contemplation or of unproductive feeling. Even here on earth the influence of Christ's character is seen in awakening an active, self-sacrificing goodness. It sends the true disciples

to the abodes of the suffering. It binds them by new ties to their race. It gives them a new consciousness of being created for a ministry of beneficence; and can they, when they approach more nearly this divine Philanthropist, and learn by a new alliance with Him the fulness of his love — can they fail to consecrate themselves to his work and to kindred labors, with an energy of will unknown on earth?" (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 225.)

"It would be wrong to imagine that the inhabitants of heaven only converse. They who reach that world, enter on a state of action, life, effort. We are apt to think of the future world as so happy that none need the aid of others, that effort ceases, that the good have nothing to do but to enjoy. The truth is, that all action on earth, even the intensest, is but the sport of childhood, compared with the energy and activity of that higher life. It must be so. For what principles are so active as intellect, benevolence, the love of truth, the thirst for perfection, sympathy with the suffering, and devotion to God's purposes? And these are the ever-expanding principles of the future life." (Ibid., p. 233.)

LI.

CEASELESS PROGRESS IN HEAVEN.

SWEDENBORG. — "The angels are being continually advanced to greater and still greater perfection by the Lord; and yet they can never by any possibility be perfected to such a degree that their wisdom and intelligence may admit of comparison with the divine wisdom and intelligence of the Lord; for they are finite and the Lord is infinite, and the finite admits of no comparison with the infinite." (A. C., n. 4295.)

"There is no determinate period during a man's regeneration at which he may say, I am now perfect; for there are endless states of evil and the false in every man, all of which must be so entirely put off as no longer to appear. In some states a man may be said to be more perfect [than in others]. Those, however, who are regenerated in the life of the body, and who have lived in faith towards the Lord and charity towards their neighbor, are being continually perfected in the other life." (Ibid., n. 894.)

"Regeneration or the implantation of the life of heaven in man commences from his infancy and continues even to the latest period of his life in the world; and after his life in the world it is forever becoming more and more perfect; and, what is a

secret, the regeneration of man in the world is only a plane for the perfecting of his life to eternity." (A. C., n. 9334. See also n. 5122, 5398.)

CHANNING.—"Heaven is sometimes described in a manner which excludes the idea of improvement, of progression. The thought of a stationary existence, of remaining the same through eternity, of a world where the mind, as it looks forward to endless ages, will see no change, no progressive ascent to superior virtue, is a most discouraging and melancholy one. . . Such conceptions of heaven are altogether inconsistent with what we know of the faculties of the human understanding, which seem capable of indefinite progression, and with what we see of the works of God, which teach us that He delights in a progressive creation. We ought rather to conceive of heaven as a state which will offer far greater means of improvement than the present." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 19.)

"In this life progression is the universal law. Nothing is brought into being in its most perfect state. Everything rises to maturity from feeble beginnings. The all-wise Creator delights in a progressive system, in gradual improvement, not in immediate perfection. It is his uniform method to conduct beings through various stages, not to fix them at once in an unchangeable condition. Now, such being the method of Providence, and such the

nature and experience of man, is it not natural to expect that in a future life our nature will be progressive? . . . And when we consider that this progression will be eternal, will never end, what an astonishing conception is given us of the future greatness of man!" (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 23.)

LII.

HEAVEN A BLISSFUL COMMUNION.

SWEDENBORG.—"In heaven there is a communication of all things,—the intelligence and wisdom of one being communicated to another. Heaven is a communion of all good things, because heavenly love desires that what is its own should be another's. Consequently no one in heaven perceives his own good in himself as good, unless it be also in another. Thence, too, is the happiness of heaven. The angels derive from the Lord this disposition to communicate, for such is the nature of the Divine Love. That there is such communication in the heavens, I have also been permitted to know from experience." (H. H., n. 268.)

"The angelic state is such that every one communicates his own blessedness and happiness to another. For in the other life there is given a communication and most exquisite perception of

affections and thoughts, in consequence of which every individual communicates his joy to all others, and all others to every individual; so that each one is, as it were, the centre of all, which is the heavenly form. Therefore as the number of those who constitute the Lord's kingdom is increased, so much greater is their happiness; and hence it is that the happiness of heaven is ineffable. Such is the communication of all with each and of each with all, when one loves another better than himself. But should any one wish better to himself than to another, then the love of self prevails, which communicates nothing from itself to another but the idea of self, and this idea is most impure and loathsome." (A. C., n. 549.)

CHANNING.—"If we have ever known the enjoyments of friendship, of entire confidence, of coöperation in honorable and successful labors with those we love, we can comprehend something of the felicity of a world where souls refined from selfishness, open as the day, thirsting for new truth and virtue, endued with new power of enjoying the beauty and grandeur of the universe, allied in the noblest works of benevolence, communicate themselves to one another with the freedom of perfect love. . . How they communicate themselves, by what language or organs, we know not. But this we know, that in the progress of the mind, its power of imparting

itself must improve. . . After all, how little can our present experience help us to understand the intercourse of heaven, a communion marred by no passion, chilled by no reserve, depressed by no consciousness of sin, trustful as childhood, and overflowing with innocent joy." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 232, '3.)

LIII.

ENLARGED POWERS AND WISDOM OF THE ANGELS.

SWEDENBORG. — "The angels dwell in the light of heaven, which in its essence is divine truth or wisdom." — "They also dwell in the heat of heaven, which in its essence is divine heat or love, from which they derive the desire of becoming wise." — "They are in wisdom to such a degree that they may be called wisdoms." — "Their speech is the speech of wisdom, flowing immediately and spontaneously from thought as thought flows from affection." — "All the things that they see around them and perceive by their senses, are in agreement with their wisdom, because they are correspondences, that is, forms representative of the things belonging to wisdom [such as flowers, trees, gardens, groves, palaces, etc., of indescribable beauty and magnificence]." — "Their thoughts are not con-

fined by ideas derived from space and time, like the thoughts of men."—"Neither are they drawn downward to things terrestrial and material, nor interrupted by cares about the necessaries of life."—"Their wisdom, in comparison with human wisdom, is as a myriad to one, comparatively as the thousand things belonging to any object as seen through a perfect microscope, is to the one obscure thing which it appears to the naked eye."—"The primary reason why the angels are capable of receiving such exalted wisdom, is, that they are free from the love of self; for in proportion as any one is free from this love, he is capable of becoming wise in things divine. It is this love which closes the interiors against the Lord and heaven. But the heavenly loves in which the angels are, which are love to the Lord and the neighbor, open their interiors; for these loves are from the Lord, and the Lord Himself is in them."—"The angels are forever advancing towards perfection, because wisdom perfects them and constitutes their life. Therefore all in heaven desire wisdom, and long for it as a hungry man longs for food." (H. H., n. 266–274.)

"In heaven the light and heat which proceed from the Lord as a sun, are distinguished into degrees [continuous and discrete]. Therefore the light in the third heaven is so refulgent, and that in the second heaven is so bright, as to exceed a thousand times the mid-day light of the world. In

like manner the wisdom; for in the spiritual world light and wisdom are in a like degree of perfection. Therefore the degrees of affection there are similar; and because these are similar, so too are the degrees of uses, for the subjects of affections are uses." (D. L., § xi. in Ap. Ex., Vol. VI., p. 352.)

CHANNING.—"Among the chief wonders and glories which the future world is to disclose to us, will be the enlarged powers, relations and influences of virtuous beings. Let us not imagine that the usefulness of the good is finished at death. Then rather does it begin. Let us not judge of their state by associations drawn from the chilliness and silence of the grave. They have gone to abodes of life, of warmth, of action. They have gone to fill a larger place in the system of God. Death has expanded their powers. The clogs and fetters of the perishable body [that is, the limitations of time and space] have fallen off. . . We should represent them to our minds as ascended to a higher rank of existence, and admitted to coöperate with far higher communities. This earth was only their school, their place of education, where we saw their powers comparatively in an infant state. They have now reached a maturer age, and are gone to sustain more important relations. They have been called because their agency was needed in higher services than those of this world [and higher services imply and require

correspondingly higher wisdom]. . . They are more usefully, more honorably occupied, than when on earth." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 27, '8.)

"When we think of the good and holy who have left us, we should banish from our thoughts all gloomy images which death presents. They should rise before our minds, improved, perfected, clothed with a new lustre of goodness. We should think of them as ascended to a purer region. The countenance on which we were accustomed to see the expression of all kind affections, should shine upon us brightened with a more benignant smile. Their piety should appear as raised, refined, and kindled into purer ardor by its near approach to God. We should see them surrounded with better friends and examples than those they have left, and in the midst of the purest and happiest society." (Ibid., p. 26.)

LIV.

FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

SWEDENBORG.—"The will makes the man, and the thought only so far as it proceeds from the will."—"It is his ruling love that remains with a man after death; nor is this ever changed."—"Those things are then removed and, as it were, taken away from him, which do not agree with his

ruling love."—"That man after death forever remains such as he is in respect to his will or ruling love, has also been proved by abundant experience. It has been granted me to converse with some who lived two thousand years ago, whose lives are known because described in history; and I found that they still retained their distinctive characters, and were exactly such as they had been described; for the quality of their love, from and according to which their lives were formed, remained the same."—"The angels declare that it were easier to change a bat into a dove, or an owl into a bird of Paradise, than an infernal spirit into an angel of heaven." (H. H., n. 474, '77, '80, 527.)

"Man does evil from hell and good from the Lord."—"He who wills and loves evil in the world, wills and loves the same evil in the other life. Hence the man who is in evil is tied to hell, and is actually there as to his spirit; and after death he desires nothing more than to be where his own evil is. Therefore man after death casts himself into hell, and not the Lord." (Ibid., n. 547.)

"Nothing of the punishment which evil spirits suffer in the other world, is from the Lord, but from evil itself; for evil is so connected with its own punishment that they cannot be separated." (Ibid., n. 550.)

"When men are in opposition to the Divine, and so prevent the influx of love and mercy into them-

selves, they cast themselves into the evil of punishment, or into hell. This appears like unmercifulness and revenge from the Divine on account of the evil they have done, when yet nothing of the sort is in the Divine, but it is in the evil itself." (A. C., n. 8483.)

"The Divine [Being] permits evil, because He cannot hinder nor take it away. For the Divine wills nothing but good. Therefore if He hindered or took away the evil of punishments, vastations, persecutions, temptations, and the like, He would will evil; and then there would be no amendment, and evil would consequently increase until it had the dominion over good. Herein the case would be like that of a king who absolves the guilty: in so doing he is the cause of the evil afterwards done by them in the kingdom, and also the cause of licentiousness thence derived to others; besides that an evil person would be confirmed in evil. Therefore a just and good king, although he has the power to take away or prevent punishments, still cannot do so because he would thereby do evil and not good. It is to be observed that all punishments in the other life (and temptations [in this] also) have good for their end." (A. C., n. 827.)

"Many people suppose that 'casting into hell' means the casting down into a certain *place* containing the devil with his crew, who there inflict torment. But the case is not so; for casting into hell is

nothing but a closing up [of the interiors or heavens of the mind] by mere falsities originating in the evil wherein the persons were principled when in the world. When these are closed up, the persons are in hell; and the evils and falsities in which they then are, torment them. But the torment does not arise from the circumstance that they grieve on account of the evil they have done, but from the fact that they are restrained from doing evil, this being the delight of their life. . . From these considerations it may be clearly seen whence hell is and what it is. The fire of hell is nothing but the lust inherent in self-love which inflames and torments." (A. C., n. 8232.)

CHANNING.—"It seems to me, that a man of common understanding, reading the Scriptures without any knowledge of the way in which they have been interpreted, would not think it possible that the doctrine should ever have been drawn from them that there is to be no future punishment. . . This error should be resisted with earnestness, because it directly, palpably and without disguise diminishes the restraints on vice. It is at war with society. It is a blow at the root of social order. It lets loose those propensities which are constantly struggling against the principle of duty, and which this principle, unaided by the fear of future suffering, is in multitudes poorly able to restrain. . . Guilt and punishment are

seen to have a connection too natural and intimate to be wholly separate even in thought. . . A solemn darkness hangs over the prison-house of the condemned. One thing alone is certain, that we shall suffer greatly hereafter if we live here in neglect of God's known will. . . That there will be a limit to future punishment, that it will operate to reform us, or that there will be bounds to the consequences of unfortunate guilt, the Scriptures nowhere declare. . . [The Bible] shows us the wicked banished into darkness. In that exile it leaves them. That darkness hides them from our sight. If mercy is to be extended, it is mercy to be revealed hereafter." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 24–26.)

"It is maintained by some among us, that punishment is confined to the present state; that in changing worlds, we shall change our characters; that moral evil is to be buried with the body in the grave. To my mind a more irrational doctrine was never broached. It contradicts all our experience of the nature and laws of the mind. . . We are this moment what the past has made us; and to suppose that at death the influences of our whole past course are to cease on our minds, and that a character is to spring up altogether at war with what has preceded it, is to suppose the most important law or principle of the mind to be violated, is to destroy all analogy between the present and future, and to substitute for experience the wildest dreams of fancy. . . Why shall

the mind put on a new character, by laying aside the gross instruments through which it now operates? . . . Lop off the criminal's hands; does the disposition to do mischief vanish with them? When the feet mortify, do we see a corresponding mortification of the will to go astray? The loss of sight or hearing is a partial death; but is a single vice plucked from the mind, or one of its strong passions palsied by this destruction of its chief corporeal instruments?" (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 159, '60.)

"Let us not listen for a moment to a doctrine so irrational, as that our present characters do not follow us into a future world. If we are to live again, let us settle it as a sure fact, that we shall carry with us our present minds, such as we now make them; that we shall reap good or ill according to their improvement or corruption; and, of consequence, that every act which affects character, will reach in its influence beyond the grave, and have a bearing on our future weal or woe."

"It is plainly implied in Scripture, that we shall suffer much more from sin, evil tempers, irreligion, in the future world, than we suffer here. . . After death, character will produce its full effect. According to the Scriptures, the color of our future existence will be wholly determined by the habits and principles which we carry into it. The circumstances which in this life prevent vice, sin, wrongdoing, from inflicting pain, will not operate here-

after. There the evil mind will be exposed to its own terrible agency."

"One and only one evil can be carried from this world to the next, and that is the evil within us, moral evil, guilt, crime, ungoverned passion, the depraved mind, the memory of a wasted or ill-spent life, the character which has grown up under neglect of God's voice in the soul and in his Word. This, this will go with us, to stamp itself on our future frames, to darken our future being, to separate us like an impassable gulf from our Creator, and from pure and happy beings, to be as a consuming fire and an undying worm." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 159–166. The same teaching to be found also in *The Perfect Life.*)

LV.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE INNER AND OUTER MAN IN THE HEREAFTER.

SWEDENBORG. — "All the spirits in hell, when viewed in any degree of heavenly light, appear in the form of their own evil; for every one there is the image of his own evil, because his interiors and exteriors act in unity, — the interiors exhibiting themselves visibly in the exteriors, which are the face, the body, the speech and the gestures. Thus their character is known as soon as they are seen.

In general they are forms of contempt of others; of menace against those who do not pay them respect; of hatred of various kinds; also of various kinds of revenge. Ferocity and cruelty from their interiors are clearly visible through these forms. . . Their faces are hideous, and void of life like corpses; in some cases they are black; in others they are fiery like little torches; in others, disfigured with pimples, warts and ulcers. Their bodies also are monstrous; and their speech is like the speech of anger, hatred, or revenge, — for every one speaks from his own falsity, and in a tone corresponding to his own evil. In a word, they are all images of their own hell.

"It is, however, to be observed that such is the appearance of infernal spirits when seen in the light of heaven; but among themselves they appear like men. This is of the Lord's mercy, that they may not appear as loathsome to each other as they do to the angels. But this appearance is a fallacy which becomes manifest soon as a ray of light from heaven is let in; for in the light of heaven everything appears as it really is." (H. H., n. 553.)

"The faces of all in the spiritual world become the images of their affections. . . Hence the form of every man after death is the more beautiful, the more interiorly he had loved divine truths and had lived according to them. For the interiors of every one are opened and formed according to their love

and life; therefore the more interior is the affection, the more conformable it is to heaven, and hence the more beautiful is the face. Therefore the angels of the inmost heaven are the most beautiful, because they are forms of heavenly love. . . I have seen the faces of angels of the third heaven, which were so beautiful that no painter with all his art could ever give to colors such animation as to equal a thousandth part of the brightness and life which appeared in their countenances." (H. H., n. 459.)

CHANNING. — "Now in the present state we find that the mind has an immense power over the body, and when diseased often communicates disease to its sympathizing companion. I believe that, in the future state, the mind will have this power of conforming its outward frame to itself incomparably more than here. We must never forget that in that world mind or character is to exert an all-powerful sway; and accordingly it is rational to believe that the corrupt and deformed mind, which wants moral goodness or a spirit of concord with God and with the universe, will create for itself, as its fit dwelling, a deformed body.

"That delicate part of our organization on which sensibility, pain and pleasure depend, is, I believe, peculiarly alive to the touch of moral evil. How easily, then, may the mind hereafter frame the future body according to itself, so that in proportion to its

vice, it will receive, through its organs and senses, impressions of gloom which it will feel to be the natural productions of its own depravity. (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 165.)

LVI.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND ITS SURROUNDINGS IN THE HEREAFTER.

SWEDENBORG.—"The delights of every one's life are turned into corresponding delights after death. This may indeed be known from the science of correspondences; but as this science is not generally understood, I will illustrate the subject by some examples from experience.

"All who are in evil and have confirmed themselves in falsities against the truths of the church, and especially they who have rejected the Word, shun the light of heaven, and betake themselves to dark subterranean places and the clefts of rocks, and there hide themselves. And they seek such retreats because they have loved falsities and hated truths; for such caverns and clefts of rocks and darkness also correspond to falsities, and light corresponds to truths. It is their delight to dwell in such places, and disagreeable to them to dwell in open plains. They, too, who have taken delight in clandestine

and insidious plots, and in the secret contrivance of fraudulent schemes, are also in similar caverns, and enter into chambers so dark that they cannot even see one another, and there they whisper in each other's ears in corners. That is what the delight of their love is turned into. They who have studied the sciences with no other end than to acquire the reputation of learning, and have taken delight in the things of memory from pride, love sandy places which they choose in preference to fields and gardens; for sandy places correspond to such studies. . . They who have been sordidly avaricious, dwell in huts and love swinish filth. . . They who have passed their lives in mere pleasures, lived delicately and indulged their appetites, prizing such enjoyments as the highest good of life, love excreta and filthy places in the other life, because such pleasures are spiritual filth, and they shun places that are clean; because the former are delightful and the latter undelightful to them." (H. H., n. 488.)

"The visible objects which exist in the heavens, correspond to the interiors of the angels, and to those things which belong to their faith and love, and thence to their intelligence and wisdom. To confirm this by examples from experience, I will adduce some particulars by way of illustration.

"They who have loved divine truths and the Word from interior affection, in the other life dwell in light

— in elevated places which appear like mountains, where they are continually in the light of heaven. They have no idea of darkness like that of night in the world. And they also live in a vernal temperature. There are exhibited before them as it were fields and harvests and likewise vineyards. Everything in their houses glistens as if made of precious stones. To look through the windows is like looking through pure crystals. These are the delightful objects of their sight; but the same things are interiorly delightful on account of their correspondence with divine celestial things; for the truths of the Word which they have loved, correspond to harvests, vineyards, precious stones, windows and crystals.

"They who have loved the sciences, and by means of them have cultivated their rational faculty and so procured to themselves intelligence, and have at the same time acknowledged the Divine, find the pleasure which they derived from the sciences and their rational delight, turned in the other life into spiritual delight which is that of the knowledges of [spiritual] good and truth. They dwell in gardens where appear beds of flowers and grass-plats beautifully arranged, and rows of trees round about, with porticoes and walks. The trees and flowers are varied every day. The view of the whole together fills their minds with delight which is continually renewed by the varieties in detail. And because

these objects correspond to things divine, and they who behold them are in the science of correspondence, they are perpetually replenished with new knowledges whereby their spiritual rational faculty is perfected. They are sensible of these delights, because gardens, beds of flowers, grass-plats and trees correspond to sciences and knowledges, and the intelligence derived from them." (H. H., n. 489.)

Now, although Channing has nowhere given us in detail his conception of the outward or phenomenal world in the Hereafter, he has virtually recognized the great underlying principle or law so often and emphatically declared by Swedenborg. He believed that in the future life the outer world would assume different aspects according to the mental or moral condition of its beholder; that a dark and disordered state of the soul would there shed darkness and disorder on all around it. And he bases his conviction on well-known facts drawn from observation and experience in the present life. For he declares his belief, "that in that world mind or character is to exert an all-powerful sway;" and that it will there not only "frame the future body according [that is in correspondence] to itself," but that "in proportion to its vice, it will *receive*, through its organs and senses, impressions of gloom which it will feel to be *the natural productions of its own depravity*." Everywhere and always that which occurs under the law of correspondence, seems a perfectly *natural*

result; for it takes place according to an established law of divine order. And he gives an equally clear and emphatic expression to this belief and its foundation, in the following paragraph:—

"When I reflect how, in the present world, a guilty mind has power to deform the countenance, to undermine health, to poison pleasure, to darken the fairest scenes of nature, to turn prosperity into a curse, I can easily understand how, in the world to come, sin, working without obstruction according to its own nature, should spread the gloom of a dungeon over the whole creation, and wherever it goes, should turn the universe into a hell." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 165.)

And if sin possesses this transforming power in the other world as in this — if evil or hell within the soul stamps its own unseemliness, disorder and gloom on all without, for the same reason and under the self-same law, truth and goodness — all the noblest attainments and all the sweetest of heavenly graces — should see themselves mirrored in a world of corresponding brightness and beauty; so that those who have heaven within, will see the very same heaven or its corresponding creations reflected in all the things without.

Little, therefore, as Channing has said on this subject, his clear recognition of the great law that determines the outward aspect of things in the other life, brings him into the same close agreement with Swe-

denborg here, as we have found him to be elsewhere. And both are in like agreement with one of our own poets, who saw deep into the heart of nature and of man, and who, in his "Thoughts on the Soul," sings thus in harmony with our gifted seers:—

"Yes: man reduplicates himself. You see
In yonder lake, reflected rock and tree.
Each leaf at rest, or quivering in the air,
Now rests, now stirs as if a breeze were there.

. . . . . .

"The world, O man, is like that lake to thee:
Turn where thou wilt, thyself in all things see
Reflected back. As drives the blinding sand
Round Egypt's piles, where'er thou tak'st thy stand,
If that thy heart be barren, there will sweep
The drifting waste, like waves along the deep.

. . . . . .

"Who has no inward beauty, none perceives,
Though all around is beautiful. Nay, more —
In nature's calmest hour he hears the roar
Of winds and flinging waves — puts out the light
When high and angry passions meet in fight;
And, his own bosom into tumult hurled,
He makes a turmoil of a quiet world.

. . . . . .

"Soul! fearful is thy power, which thus transforms
All things into thy likeness."

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LVII.

SWEDENBORG'S VIEW OF CHRIST.

I HAVE thus far compared the beliefs and teachings of SWEDENBORG and CHANNING on nearly sixty different subjects — many of them of vital importance, and most of them subjects of deep concern to every Christian believer. I have placed their testimony on these several points side by side, and as far as practicable allowed each writer to speak for himself. And on all the subjects discussed, the reader has seen how close and complete is their agreement — always in substance, but never in form or phraseology. And their agreement is the more remarkable, because the teachings of both writers are seen to differ widely from the generally received doctrines of the last century, and even from most of the popular written creeds of to-day. Some of these agreements, too, are on points where the reader would least expect to find any similarity — another fact which enhances the importance and interest of the inquiry.

But upon one subject there *seems* to be quite a

difference between them; and that is, the nature (not the *character*) of Jesus Christ, and the manner in which he should be regarded by Christians.

Swedenborg is clear and emphatic in his teaching on this subject. Throughout his works he insists that Christ is the manifested Jehovah,—God incarnate,—"God with us." The Divine Being, he says, assumed humanity according to his own established laws of order. He was born into this world as all men are. But that which was born—the Son of God—was conceived or begotten of the Holy Spirit. He had no natural father, according to the accepted Christian Record. As to his external or natural humanity, therefore—the humanity which He derived from the mother—He was like other men, full of hereditary proclivities to evil, which exposed Him to the assaults of all the hells, and rendered Him liable to all manner of temptations as other men are. But as to his internal, He was different from all other men; was absolutely Divine from conception; was Life Itself, and not a mere recipient of life.

So that while on earth, He was at once Divine and human—God and man. And his human had all the proclivities and frailties and limitations of other men. But by a process called glorification, which is the type or prototype of every man's regeneration, He gradually put off all the finite, maternal humanity, or so completely filled and united

it with his essential Divinity, that it was made Divine also; thus offering to our human needs Divinity accommodated to our finite conceptions, or a Divine Humanity. This accommodated Divinity or Divine Humanity we can see mentally. This we can form some idea of. This we can draw nigh to and contemplate and love, and thus appropriate, or receive into our own souls by spiritual assimilation. But no finite being on earth or in heaven can form any conception of the unveiled, unaccommodated, absolute Divinity. Accordingly Swedenborg says: —

"What is Divine is incomprehensible, being above every [finite] understanding, even that of the angels Nevertheless this Divine, which in itself is incomprehensible, can flow into man's rational principle by means of the Lord's Divine Human; and it is received according to the truths which are therein, consequently in a different manner by different persons." (A. C., n. 2531.)

"The [absolute] Divinity is above all thought, and is altogether incomprehensible even by the angels." (Ibid., n. 5110. See also A. C., n. 3404, 2533.)

That sublime and redemptive process whereby the assumed human was glorified or united to the Divine in Jesus Christ, may not be easy of comprehension. It was a process of which the unregenerate man can form but a faint, perhaps no very clear, conception. Yet it is scarcely more difficult to un-

derstand, than it is to understand how our natural or external man becomes subject to, or united with, our internal or spiritual man by regeneration; for our regeneration is the perfect image of the Lord's glorification. And if we can see that, before regeneration, there is not a perfect agreement between our spiritual and natural man, or between what some call "our higher and lower nature," and that such agreement or oneness is effected only by means of much self-denial and internal conflict, then we can see how the Divine and the human, or God and man, could dwell together in the person of Jesus Christ, until, through a series of temptation-conflicts, in which the Divine was always triumphant, they became perfectly united.

The glorification of our Lord, therefore, was the orderly, full, and perfect development of Divinity in humanity; the former bringing the latter into a state of perfect oneness with itself, like the oneness between the body and the soul, or between the natural and the spiritual man when our regeneration is complete.

So that, according to Swedenborg, God as revealed to us in the person of the glorified Christ — Divinity manifested in humanity, or the Divine Humanity — is the true and proper Object of religious worship. In Him are united the Divine and the human, like the spiritual and the natural in a thoroughly regenerate man. So that when Jesus says,

"I and my Father are one," He refers to something more than a unity of feeling, desire and purpose. He refers to a unity like that of light with heat, or of the external with the internal of a regenerate man, or of body with soul. In drawing nigh to Jesus Christ, therefore, we draw nigh to God; in becoming renewed after his likeness, we are renewed in the likeness of God; in addressing our prayers to Him, we pray to God, just as we address the soul of a friend through the medium of his body.

APPARENTLY DIFFERENT FROM CHANNING'S.

Now we find no such idea as this anywhere in Channing's writings. On the contrary, he believed that Christ was a separate and distinct being from the Father, and, therefore, not a proper object of religious worship. So that, on this subject, there would seem to be a wide difference between him and Swedenborg.

And yet, on closer examination, we shall find this difference to be more apparent than real, more formal than substantial. And we shall see, too, that Swedenborg's doctrine on this subject is precisely what Channing needed to give harmony, consistency, and unity to his own Christology, or to his clearly expressed views of the moral perfection, preëxistence and sovereignty of Jesus Christ.

Absolute Divinity is above the comprehension of

finite minds. Neither man nor angel can form any idea of it. It is the unfathomable mystery of being. It is the unsearchable, the inscrutable, the unthinkable, the unknown and unknowable. Addressing our prayers to pure and absolute Divinity, therefore, is praying to the unknown and incomprehensible; to something entirely above the thought of men or angels; to something of which the finite understanding takes no cognizance and forms no conception. It is like the natural eye looking into boundless space and seeing nothing. And praying to such an invisible, unknowable, incomprehensible, divine essence, is not praying to a Divine Being or Person. It is praying to a *name*,—nothing more; a name that does not even suggest a Divine Form or Personality, or any intelligible qualities. But Divinity brought down and accommodated to our finite conceptions, — the Divine revealed in and through the human, or a Divine Humanity, — this we can mentally approach and contemplate; this we can see and love and reverence, and rationally seek to become united with.

Now the essential and absolute Divinity is designated in Scripture by the terms Jehovah, God and Father; and the Divine Humanity, by Jesus Christ and the Son of God. The former is fully revealed to us in and through the latter; and hence the Son is said to reveal or "declare" the Father, — to "bring Him forth to view," etc. And we can mentally ap-

proach the former only through the medium of the latter, comparatively as we have access to the invisible soul of a friend through the medium of his visible body. Hence Christ (the Divine Humanity) says, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me;" for no one can mentally approach or form any conception of the essential Divinity, but in and through the Divine Humanity, — the comprehensible and visible medium in whom the Divinity dwells in all fulness, as the soul in the body.

WHAT CHANNING REALLY WORSHIPED.

It is not denied that Channing's formal prayers were addressed to the absolute Divinity. To him it seemed wrong to address them to aught else. But did he, then, reverence and love an incomprehensible essence, or a mere *name?* Did he ignore, overlook, or pass by the Divine Humanity, and endeavor to "climb up some other way," as not a few have believed and represented? By no means. It is plain from his writings — nothing could be plainer, I think — that in his heart he worshiped the Divine Humanity, *and nothing else.* For oral or formal worship is not the real worship. What the soul bows down to and inwardly adores; what the heart loves and reverences above all else; what the understanding approves as the supreme good, — *this* is what the individual really worships.

And can any one who is familiar with the character and writings of Channing, doubt that it was the divine-human qualities or characteristics of Jesus Christ that he truly loved and worshiped? In Christ he saw reflected or revealed all that he could comprehend of Divinity. In Him he recognized a wisdom and power possessed by no merely human being; the fulness and *perfection* of all human excellence; a pure and universal love, seeking to deliver the world from the thraldom of selfishness and sin; a sublime spirit of self-forgetfulness, self-denial and self-sacrifice; a boundless benevolence, compassion and forgiveness; a willingness to spend and be spent, — yea, a desire to give Himself, with all his amazing wealth of love, for the good of humanity.

These are the qualities which Channing clearly recognized in Jesus Christ. And well he might say, as he did: "I believe him to be a more than human being." These are the divine-human attributes with which, to his mind, Jesus Christ was clothed. These attributes he loved to contemplate. These he held up continually before his people as worthy of their highest homage. These he reverenced and loved above all else. And in such love and reverence was there not the real and essential, though not the verbal and formal, worship of the Divine Humanity? Swedenborg answers this question when he says: "All who live the life of faith [that is, live righteously] have the Divine Humanity in their hearts"

(A. C., n. 2724); by which I understand him to mean, that internally or at heart they *worship* the Divine Humanity, though they may not do so with their lips.

Again he says:—

"The Lord's Divine Humanity is denied in heart [however it may be acknowledged and worshiped with the lips] by all who are in the life of evil, that is, by all who despise others in comparison with themselves, and bear hatred towards those who do not pay them homage... Such persons cannot acknowledge the Lord [in his Divine Humanity]... But they who are in the life of good, do acknowledge Him [in their hearts if not with their lips]; since they are receptive of influx from heaven, the chief constituent of which is love or charity; for heaven is the Lord's, from whom all things of love and charity proceed." (A. C., n. 2354.)

And he further tells us that the highest homage we can pay to Christ — the true and real worship of Him — is to love and religiously obey his precepts. Agreeable to his own words: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." And what a person loves supremely, is what he really worships. And who can doubt that the beauty and moral perfections of Jesus Christ — the divine-human qualities which Channing saw and acknowledged in Him — were what he loved and reverenced above all else, and what he would have

others also love supremely? In his discourses on "Love to Christ," are to be found ample illustrations of the truth of what is here said. —

"I know but one character," he says, "which entitles a being to our hearts, and it is that which the Scriptures express by the word righteousness; which in man is often called virtue; in God, holiness; which consists essentially in supreme reverence for, and adoption of, what is right.

"What is it that is to be loved in Christ? Why are we to hold Him dear? I answer: There is but one ground of virtuous affection in the universe, but one object worthy of cherished and enduring love in heaven or on earth, and that is moral goodness. I make no exceptions. My principle applies to all beings. . . The claim of God to the love of his rational offspring rests on the rectitude and benevolence of his will. . .

"What I esteem the ground of love to Christ, is his spotless purity, his moral perfection, his unrivalled goodness. It is the spirit of his religion, which is the spirit of God dwelling in Him without measure. Of consequence to love Christ is to love the perfection of virtue, of righteousness, of benevolence. And the great excellence of this love is, that, by cherishing it, we imbibe, we strengthen in our own souls, the most illustrious virtue, and, through Jesus, become like God." (*Channing's Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 185–6.)

"It is very clear that love to a being must rest on what we know of Him, and not on unknown and unintelligible attributes." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 193.)

"I consider love to Christ as requiring nothing so much, as that we fix our thoughts on the excellence of his character, study it, penetrate our minds with what was peculiar in it, and cherish profound veneration for it." (Ibid., p. 192.)

"I call you to love Jesus, that you may bring yourselves into contact and communion with perfect virtue, and become what you love. I know no sincere, enduring good but the moral excellence which shines forth in Jesus Christ." (Ibid., p. 197.)

Jesus Christ, then, according to Channing, is the incarnation of truth and righteousness; the living embodiment of pure and perfect morality. And what is it to love perfect moral excellence, but to love God, the Being of whom alone such excellence can be predicated?

"What is morality," he asks, "but the exercise of a benevolent and just temper towards all beings within our knowledge and influence? If so, what is God's character, the character which we are to love, but perfect morality? What but the very dispositions, in their fulness, which conscience enjoins upon every man, and which form what we call rectitude? To love God, then, is to love morality in its most perfect form." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 15.)

It would seem from this, that, according to Channing's belief, the love of God is identical with the love of Christ; for the love of Christ meant, with him, the love of virtue, the love of righteousness, the love of all moral excellence, the love and *practice* of the principles of the religion He taught and lived,—the love and practice of truth, justice, sincerity and universal benevolence. And the supreme love of these is the internal and real, though there may not be the external and formal, acknowledgment and worship of the Divine Humanity. For, as Swedenborg says:—

"To love the Lord is not to love his person, but it is to love those things which proceed from Him; for these are the Lord with man. That is to say, it is to love what is itself sincere, right and just; and since these things are the Lord, therefore in the degree that man loves them and acts from them, he loves and acts from the Lord; and in the same degree the Lord removes things insincere and unjust, as to the very intentions and will wherein are their roots." (Ap. Ex., n. 973.)

And this state of love is, according to the same authority, a state of internal and genuine worship. For he says:—

"When a man is principled in good and truth, then there is divine worship in every employment in which he engages; for he then has respect to the Divine in everything; he venerates it, loves it,

consequently worships it. That this is the genuine divine worship, is unknown to those who place all worship in adoration and prayers; that is, in things of the mouth and thought, and not in deeds grounded in the good of love and faith." (A. C., n. 10,143.)

Precisely this seems to have been Channing's idea of the highest kind of worship. And although, as I have already remarked, his formal prayers were usually addressed to the absolute Divinity, yet we find a single paragraph at the close of one of his discourses in "The Perfect Life," containing an invocation addressed to the Divine Humanity, or the Glorified Christ. The sermon was preached in the latter part of his life, on Christmas day, and in it the writer aimed to unfold what seemed to him "the sense in which this Babe, born in the Manger of Bethlehem, became and is a *Saviour*." It is a sermon "in which," says the distinguished Editor, "Channing pours forth the fulness of his love for Jesus Christ, as the embodiment in Mind, Character and Life, of Ideal Perfection; . . . closing with an Invocation — the only one found in his manuscripts — to the First-born among many Brethren."—The following is the paragraph referred to: —

"Compassionate Saviour! We welcome thee to our world. We welcome thee to our hearts. We bless thee for the Divine Goodness thou hast brought from Heaven; for the Souls thou hast warmed with love to man, and lifted up in love to God; for the

efforts of Divine Philanthropy which thou hast inspired; and for that hope of a pure Celestial Life, through which thy disciples triumph over death. Benevolent Saviour! Inspirer of Goodness! We offer thee this tribute of affectionate and reverential gratitude on earth; and we hope to know, to love, to resemble and to approach thee more nearly and more worthily in Heaven." (Pp. 239, '40.)

ASSIMILATION TO CHRIST.

And Channing held that union with Christ—becoming one with Him in thought, feeling and purpose—receiving his spirit into our hearts—is identically the same as receiving God's spirit, and so becoming united with Him. And "the true religion," he says, "consists in proposing as our great end, a growing likeness to the Supreme Being." And we grow into this likeness by receiving into our hearts the Divine spirit and ultimating it in our lives. And if we receive Christ's spirit and grow into his likeness in precisely the same way, how does his spirit differ from God's spirit, or conjunction with Him differ from conjunction with God? And if these are identical, then it would seem to follow as a logical conclusion from Channing's own admissions, that Christ, viewed as to his inmost, soul, spirit or person, is identical with God. And on the reception of Christ's own

life, and the importance and means of becoming assimilated to Him, he says: —

"Let not the false views of Christianity which prevail in the world seduce you into the belief that Christ can bless you in any other way than by assimilating you to his own virtue, than by breathing into you his own mind. Do not imagine that any faith or love towards Jesus can avail you, but that which quickens you to conform yourselves to his spotless purity and unconquerable rectitude. . . He can impart to you nothing so precious as Himself, as his own mind; and, believe me, my hearers, this mind may dwell in you. His sublimest virtues may be yours. Admit, welcome this truth. Look up to the illustrious Son of God with the conviction that you may become one with Him in thought, in feeling, in power, in holiness. His character will become a blessing just as far as it shall awaken in you this consciousness, this hope." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 148–9.)

BY WHOM IS CHRIST BEST UNDERSTOOD?

Swedenborg often tells us that God appears to every one according to the individual's own state; for we see, understand, interpret and appreciate Him according to the measure of his life that we receive, or according to the degree of conformity of our own souls to his likeness. Thus we understand Him by

receiving and appropriating his own life, — becoming pure and unselfish as He is; and we do this through faithful and persistent obedience to the laws of that life. (See p. 156.) And in perfect agreement with this was Channing's idea. Hear him: —

"God becomes a real being to us in proportion as his own nature is unfolded within us. To a man who is growing in the likeness of God, faith begins even here to change into vision. He carries in himself a proof of a Deity which can only be understood by experience. . . That unbounded spiritual energy which we call God, is conceived by us only through consciousness. . . The Infinite Light would be forever hidden from us did not kindred rays dawn and brighten within us. God is another name for human intelligence raised above all error and imperfection and extended to all possible truth. The same is true of God's goodness. How do we understand this, but by the principle of love implanted in the human breast? Whence is it that this divine attribute is so faintly comprehended, but from the feeble development of it in the multitude of men? . . . The same is true of all the moral perfections of the Deity. These are comprehended by us only through our own moral nature." (*Works*, Vol. III., pp. 229–234.)

And as it is the self-same thing to become God-like as to become Christ-like, therefore we can understand or see Christ in his true character, only in

the degree that we receive his divine-human qualities into our hearts and become like Him. The different views that people take of Him arise from the difference in their own characters, or the different degrees in which they receive his spirit. Accordingly Channing says: —

"Nothing so much brightens and strengthens the eye of the mind to understand an excellent being, as likeness to him. We never know a great character until something congenial to it has grown up within ourselves. No strength of intellect and no study can enable a man of a selfish and sensual mind to comprehend Jesus. Such a mind is covered with a mist; and just in proportion as it subdues evil within itself, the mist will be scattered. Jesus will rise upon it with a sun-like brightness, and will call forth its most fervent and most enlightened affection." (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 212.)

CHRIST THE EMANCIPATOR FROM EVIL.

Then it is Jesus Christ, according to Channing, who delivers us from all evil, who opens heaven within us, renews us spiritually, and so fits us for heaven. And surely, if He does this, He is our Regenerator and Saviour, — the Giver of Eternal Life. For, again, says Channing: —

"It is the most interesting event in human history, that such a being as Jesus has entered our

world to accomplish the deliverance of our minds from all evil; . . . to open heaven within them, and thus to fit them for heaven. It is our greatest privilege that he is brought within our view, offered to our imitation, to our trust, to our love. A sincere and enlightened attachment to Him is at once our honor and our happiness, — a spring of virtuous action, of firmness in suffering, of immortal hope. But remember, this will not grow up of itself. You must resolve upon it and cherish it. . . In the last place, you should obey his precepts, and through this obedience should purify and invigorate your minds to know and love him more. Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 314, 315.)

CHRIST THE EMBODIMENT OF HIS RELIGION.

According to Swedenborg, Jesus Christ was, and forever is, the living embodiment of the principles He taught. He was the very incarnation of Divine Love and Wisdom; the Divine Logos, or Word made flesh; the Infinite brought down and accommodated to finite beings and finite conditions; the development of Divinity in frail and finite humanity, giving to our human needs an approachable and comprehensible Object of worship, — a Divine Humanity. He, therefore, is not to be thought of apart from the truths He taught or the religious system

He founded, any more than the sun is to be thought of as something separate and apart from his own light and heat, or from the system of which he is the central force and controlling power. Christ and Christianity, according to his teaching, are indissolubly united. The former is the omnipresent and vital force in the latter. Christianity without the living and ever-present Christ as its quickening power and vitalizing warmth, were but a cold and lifeless system, — a mere skeleton instead of a living thing clothed with warm human flesh and blood. And Channing's idea seems to have been not very different from this. In a letter to Prof. Bush, written in 1841, he says:

"I regard Jesus as the Shekinah *to us;* as a manifestation, embodiment, of God to us, but in a far higher sense than the old Shekinah; for he was not merely a symbol of the divine perfections, but God's wisdom, love, purity, dwelt *really* in him. The fulness of the Godhead was *substantially* in him. His will corresponded precisely to the divine." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 438.)

"Considering him [John] as *personifying* this truth [Proverbs viii. 22–30], is his language at all hard, forced, — 'This was in the beginning with God. By it all things were made'? It contains the principles, the great ideas, according to and by which the universe was formed. 'It was God.' It is the very mind of God laid open,— *the eternal truth*

which constitutes the Divine Person. 'In it was life, spiritual, immortal life." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 439.)

"Jesus is his religion embodied and made visible. The connection between him and his system is peculiar. It differs altogether from that which ancient philosophers bore to their teachings. . . There is no such thing as Christianity without Christ. We cannot know it separately from him. . . He pervades it throughout. In loving him, we love his religion. . . Therefore they who would make an abstract of his precepts, and say that it is enough to follow these without thinking of their author, grievously mistake, and rob the system of much of its energy." (*Works*, Vol. IV., pp. 201, 202.)

"Christianity, from beginning to end, is intimately connected with its divine Teacher. It is not an abstract system. The rational Christian who would think of it as such, who, in dwelling on the religion, overlooks the Revealer, is unjust to it. Would he see and feel its power, let him see it warm, living, breathing, acting, in the mind, heart, and life of its Founder. Let him love it there. . . Love to Christ, when it is an enlightened and rational affection, includes the love of his whole religion. . . In many cases, this affection is an irregular fervor which impairs the force and soundness of the mind, and which is substituted for obedience to his precepts, for the virtues which ennoble the soul." (Ibid., pp. 104, 105.)

"Reduce Christianity to a set of abstract ideas,

sever it from its Teacher, and it ceases to be the 'power of God unto salvation.' . . . Christian truth coming to me from the living soul of Jesus, with his living faith and love, and brought out in his grand and beautiful life, is a very, very different thing from an abstract system. The more I know of Jesus, the less I can spare him; and this place which he fills in my heart, the quickening office which his character performs, is to me no mean proof of his reality and his superhuman greatness." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 442.)

And in his last public utterance — his address at Lenox, — which has been called "the swan-song of a son of light," there occurs this striking passage: —

"The doctrine of the 'Word made flesh' shows us God uniting himself most intimately with our nature, *manifesting himself in a human form*, for the very end of making us partakers of his own perfection."

CHANNING NOT A HUMANITARIAN.

It is plain, therefore, that Channing's idea of Christ was very different from that of the humanitarians. He believed Him to have been morally perfect, absolutely sinless, the personal manifestation or embodiment of pure unselfish love here on earth. He regarded Him, therefore, as more than human, — as standing apart from, and at a measureless dis-

tance above, all mere human beings in point of moral excellence. But he needed, I think, Swedenborg's doctrine of the incarnation of Divinity in humanity — a humanity encumbered by an inconceivable weight of moral evil, or proclivities to evil — to give consistency to his own view on this point, and to furnish a rational explanation of the temptations by which Christ was assailed.

"The humanitarian system," he says, "seems to me to labor under serious objections; nor am I at all influenced by the argument which its disciples insist upon so earnestly, that it brings Jesus nearer to us. His moral perfection seems to me his great peculiarity and separation from all human beings; and this remains the same on all systems, and is more inexplicable on the humanitarian system than on any other." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 414.)

"I am also grieved to find you[1] insensible to the clear, bright distinction between Jesus Christ and ourselves. To me, and I should think to every reader of the New Testament, he stands apart, alone, in the only particular in which separation is to be desired. He is a being of moral perfection unstained by sin. . . . My own history, and the history of the race, and the best beings I have known, have taught me the immense distance of us all from Christ. He is to be approached by gradual self-crucifixion, by a war with

[1] Letter to Miss E. P. Peabody. 1840.

the evil within us, which will not end till the grave." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 446.)

"Finally, consider the offices which Jesus sustained, of Saviour of the world, the one Mediator between God and man, the Prince of Life, who is to raise the dead and judge mankind,—do these offices appear to be compatible with simple humanity? Do they belong to a being who himself needs a mediator, who himself has sins to be pardoned? For this must have been true of Christ, if he was a mere man." (Ibid., p. 54.)

CHRIST'S CHARACTER THE GRAND MIRACLE.

"I see not how the rejection of these [the Christian miracles] can be separated from the rejection of Jesus Christ. Without them he becomes a mere fable, for nothing is plainer than that from the beginning miracles constituted his history. There is not a trace of a time when he existed in men's minds without them...

"The *grand miracle*, as often has been said, is the *perfect, divine character* of Christ; and to such a being a miraculous mode of manifestation seems *natural*. It is by no figure of speech that I call Christ miraculous. He was more separate from other men than his acts from other acts. He was the sinless, spotless Son of God, distinguished from all men by that infinite peculiarity—freedom from moral evil... What beautiful types of Christ's moral,

healing, quickening power we have in the miraculous parts of his history! I feel, as I read them, that the conception of such a character as Christ, and the unfolding of it in such harmonious acts and operations, transcended human power, especially in that low moral age." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 442, 443.)

CHRIST EXALTED TO UNIVERSAL EMPIRE.

And Channing believed, too, that Christ's active interest in the spiritual welfare of mankind, and his power and disposition to promote it, did not cease with his life on earth. He believed that He has a permanent connection with the human race; that He is "now exalted to universal empire;" that He is to-day present in the midst of his true disciples, intimately united to his Church on earth, its inspiring Genius, its guiding Light, its constant, quickening Power; and that the time is coming when his influence on the world will be more conspicuous than it is now.

"According to these [the Scriptures], Jesus Christ is not a teacher whose agency was chiefly confined to the time when he was on earth. *He ever lives, and is ever active for mankind.* He sustains other offices than those of a teacher; he is Mediator, Intercessor, Lord and Saviour. He has a permanent and constant connection with mankind, and a most intimate union with his Church. He is

through all time, now as well as formerly, the active and efficient friend of the human race." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 60.)

"According to the Scriptures, Christ, the Son of God, . . . is now exalted to universal empire. Angels are subjected to him. Nature is subjected to him. He is present by his knowledge and power with his Church. He never forgets the race for which he died. He intercedes for them. He assists them. He watches over the interests of his religion. He will make it victorious. According to the Scriptures, the time is coming when his influence, now silent, will be conspicuous, when the veil behind which he operates will be withdrawn. He is to come with hosts of angels. He is to raise the dead, to judge the world, to fulfill the solemn threatenings and to confer the everlasting blessings of the gospel.

"This connection of Jesus Christ with the human race seems to me very clearly unfolded in Scripture; and though it is astonishing by its vastness, yet it is in no respect incredible." (Ibid.)

MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION OF CHRIST.

Many passages in his writings furnish conclusive evidence that Channing accepted as historically and literally true, the account of the *manner* of Christ's advent as recorded by Matthew and Luke. He

believed that the manner of his conception was as different from that of other mortals, as were his character and whole history; that his conception by the Holy Spirit was the commencement of that series of miracles, which culminated in his resurrection and ascension, and his subsequent manifestation to his disciples, and to Paul when going to Damascus. He believed, as he says, that "the outward and the inward *correspond* in God's system." And believing "the *perfect divine character* of Christ" to be itself the grandest of all miracles, he held that his whole outward history must also of necessity have been extraordinary, miraculous,— else the great law of correspondence between the outward and the inward which rules everywhere "in God's system," would have been infringed, or not fulfilled.

BELIEVED ALSO IN HIS PRE-EXISTENCE.

Consistently with his belief in Christ's miraculous conception, Channing believed also in his pre-existence. Although looking upon Him as a finite, created and dependent being, he believed that He had a conscious existence in heaven — was known, loved and reverenced by angels — before He was born in Bethlehem. Thus he says: —

"There are, you well know, several passages of Scripture which, if literally taken, teach that Christ existed before he came into the world. And we

have this very sufficient reason for interpreting these passages literally, that his whole character and the offices which he bears, imply a more than human dignity.

"Jesus Christ, then, existed before he came into the world, and in a state of great honor and felicity. He was known, esteemed, beloved, revered in the family of heaven. . . If the dignity of Christ was such as we have supposed, then the history of the universe contains no manifestation of pure, devoted love so stupendous as his. And angels who knew the Saviour in his brightness and joy, must have received from his humiliation and suffering an impression of what charity can perform and endure, such as no other transaction can have given." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., pp. 54, 55.)

It is no part of our present purpose to examine or criticise the views of Channing, but simply to compare them with those of Swedenborg; and wherein they are found to differ from his, to consider (or ask the reader to consider) which seems most agreeable to enlightened reason and the known laws and methods of the divine operation.

And a thought occurs in this connection which seems worth considering. It is this: The highest reason, and all we know of the divine laws and methods in the creation, preservation and government of the universe, concur in teaching that creation commences on the lowest or natural plane. The

natural world exists or is created first, as the foundation of the spiritual world. The man is created before the angel. The sensual or corporeal life is first formed or developed; then the intellectual, rational, spiritual, and celestial in their order. The lower forms of animal and vegetable life are ever found to precede the higher. Every living thing, indeed, goes to prove that the spiritual or angelic heavens are but the higher and more complete development of beings, whose creation or existence began in the *lowest* or natural realm.

This truth admitted, it follows that, if Jesus Christ is a finite and created being, and if he had a conscious existence in heaven before his birth in the Judean manger, then He must have had an existence on this or on some other earth prior to his existence in heaven. He must have begun to exist (and that was the time of his creation) in the lowest or natural realm. So that what is commonly called his *first*, must have been at least his *second* advent.

And then we have the problem presented of a self-conscious angelic being losing his conscious existence in heaven, and entering *by degrees* into a material organization; for the development of Christ from his conception to his perfect manhood and complete glorification, was as gradual as the development of any human being.

It is possible, I admit, to conceive of such a process. We can, for example, conceive of Dr. Channing

himself (now an angel in heaven, I doubt not) losing his conscious existence in those celestial realms, coming into this lower sphere again as an infant, gradually developing into the full stature of manhood, and becoming the same identical Dr. Channing that he was and is; conscious, too, of his identity. While such a conception may be possible, it certainly is not one that is easily formed. The mind does not readily entertain it. There is something in it which renders it extremely difficult of belief, — something, indeed, at which our reason instinctively revolts.

Not so, however, with Swedenborg's doctrine of the Divine Incarnation. It is not difficult for us to conceive of Divinity entering into a human *ovum* without the intervention of a natural father, and forming through all the subsequent stages of that divine-human development, its controling and vitalizing power, — its essential life and soul.

We can see, too, in some degree of rational light, that, with such a divine and resistless force at the centre, sin could never be victorious there; the legion of infernal spirits would, in all their assaults, be put to flight; and, in its progress towards full development, all the hereditary proclivities to evil must inevitably be overcome or cast out. And what else might we reasonably expect as the final outcome, but humanity made Divine and Divinity made human in the Being thus miraculously or di-

vinely conceived? Or, in the expressive language of the illustrious Swede, a "Divine Humanity"?

I submit, therefore, that Swedenborg's doctrine of the Divine Incarnation, and the consequent Divinity or Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ, is not only reasonable in itself — and the only reasonable view, when all the facts in the case are duly considered, — but that it is in more complete harmony with the idea of his pre-existence, and his "exaltation to universal empire," than is Channing's own view of his finiteness, his personal separateness from the Divine, and his creaturely dependence. Nothing less than Swedenborg's doctrine of the sole and supreme Divinity of Christ (so it seems to me) can render rational or consistent Channing's own expressed belief in his pre-existence.

VIEWS PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED.

Nor was this belief held by Channing as a mere speculative opinion. He regarded it as one of great practical moment, — as calculated to affect powerfully the heart of the believer. Thus he says: —

"The greatness of Christ's love cannot be adequately known, until we shall know hereafter the height from which he came to our rescue, the glory of which he divested himself, the riches which he parted with to become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. We can, however,

understand something, even here, of this love. The fact that such a being was attracted to us by our miseries, that through the power of love he came to take upon him our griefs, and exchanged heaven for the cross, — this fact is a revelation of generous affection brighter than the sun; and if believed, it ought to work in us more powerfully than all other events." (*Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 55.)

But suppose we believe, as Swedenborg teaches, that this was a revelation or manifestation of the Divine Love itself on the plane of human existence; that Christ was the living embodiment of this Love, whose very nature it is to be touched by human woes and to be forever seeking to save and bless. Would not such a belief, by presenting to us an intelligible and comprehensible Being worthy of our supreme homage, gratitude and love, work still more powerfully upon our hearts and lives? Would it not bring us into more intimate and blissful communion with the heavenly Father, if we recognized Him as dwelling with all fulness in Jesus Christ, like the soul in the body? — just as direct personal communication with an earthly sovereign, effects us more powerfully and brings us nearer to him than communication through one of his ministers however duly accredited.

Yet such is the very nature of that Divine Love which was the life and soul of Jesus Christ, and for which He stands and will forever stand as the vis-

ible manifestation and living embodiment to the minds of men. And when we consider that this love was united in his person with a wisdom and a power equally divine, can the human mind conceive of any object more worthy of our supreme love and adoration?

And what else did Channing love supremely? What else did he inwardly bow down to and worship, but those divine-human qualities which he recognized as dwelling in all fulness in Jesus Christ? And the fact that he did not externally and formally also worship the Divine Humanity, only proves some defect or lack of consistency in his beliefs, or a want of perfect agreement between his formal and his real, his outward and his inward, worship.

CHANNING'S CHRISTOLOGY SUMMARIZED.

From the quotations here made from Channing, it is easy to gather his views of Jesus Christ, and to understand his mental attitude in regard to Him. Briefly summed up, his beliefs were: —

1. That the character of Christ was morally *perfect;* that he was a being "of spotless purity," "the perfection of virtue, of righteousness, of benevolence;" "absolutely sinless;" and this is what can be said of no finite being; is what places Him at an "immense distance from us all," and what is "not to be expected in a mere human being;" and there is "no

enduring good, but the moral excellence which shines forth in Jesus Christ;" and that, while his whole history from beginning to end is miraculous, "the *grand miracle*," after all, is "the *perfect, divine character* of Christ."

2. That we should, therefore, "cherish profound veneration for his character," which we do in the degree that we seek to have our own characters conformed to his; that "we may," through self-denial and self-crucifixion, "become one with Him in thought, feeling, and holiness;" that "to love Christ, is to love his religion," or to love and practise the precepts that He taught; that "a sincere and enlightened attachment to Him" does not spring up spontaneously, or "grow up of itself," but is formed only by "obedience to his precepts."

3. That "love to a being must rest on what we know of him," together with our capacity to appreciate his moral worth; that "the selfish and sensual mind cannot comprehend Jesus," and those can comprehend Him best who are most like Him in the spirit and temper of their minds — who are most loving, self-denying and self-sacrificing,— most pure in heart and life.

4. That Jesus Christ is to be regarded as "more than man;" as a being "of superhuman greatness;" "more separate from other men than his acts from other acts;" yea, "as a manifestation, embodiment, of God to us;" as "the very mind of God" in rela-

tion to the human race, "laid open" to the view of mortals; as "the eternal truth which constitutes the Divine Person;" that we are to believe "the fulness of the Godhead was *substantially* in Him;" that "God's wisdom, love, purity, dwelt *really* in Him."

5. That "He existed before He came into the world," and "was known, esteemed, beloved, revered" by the hosts of heaven; that He "is now exalted to universal empire;" that "risen and *glorified*, He now lives on high, not as an unconcerned Spectator, but as a mighty Agent for the good of the whole human race," (p. 198;) that "angels, commissioned by his boundless love, He sends forth to minister to all heirs of salvation," (Ibid.); that "angels are subjected to Him, and Nature is subjected to Him;" that "He is to come [again] with hosts of angels; is to raise the dead, to judge the world, to fulfil the solemn threatenings and to confer the everlasting blessings of the gospel."

6. That He came into the world "to deliver our minds from all evil;" "to open heaven within them," and thus to "fit them for heaven;" that He is still actively at work to accomplish the same beneficent purpose, for "He ever lives and is ever active for mankind;" that He sustains "a permanent and constant connection" with our world, and "a most intimate union with his Church;" that He is ever seeking to impart his own life — his pure unselfish love — to hungry souls, since this alone can satisfy their

hunger and fill them with unspeakable joy; for "He can impart to you nothing so precious as Himself,—as his own mind."

Now the question is, Can all this be believed or justly said of a created, finite, dependent being? I think not,—without a very severe strain upon the meaning of words. I submit, therefore, that the language employed by Dr. Channing, when speaking of Jesus Christ, can find its complete justification in nothing less or other than Swedenborg's doctrine of the Divine Humanity; that this doctrine is more in harmony with his clearly expressed views of the character, offices, pre-existence and sovereignty of Christ, than that professed and taught by himself; that it is, indeed, the very doctrine which Channing needed to give unity, harmony and consistency to his own views, and roundness and completeness to his theological system.

True, he did not formally worship the Divine Humanity. He did not address his prayers directly to Divinity as revealed in the assumed humanity — to the Father as *brought to view* or *manifested in the Son*,— that is, to the Lord Jesus Christ. But if, as I believe and have endeavored to show, he loved supremely those divine-human qualities in Christ which he recognized and could clearly comprehend, and which he longed and earnestly strove to appropriate, then did he *really* and *at heart* worship the Divine Humanity. But no one can deny or

doubt that it would have added to the unity as well as to the harmony and consistency of his Christology, had his external and formal agreed with his internal and real worship; or had he addressed his prayers to God *in* Christ, not *out of* Him; — not as another and separate Being, but as the innermost, incomprehensible and viewless portion of the self-same Being whose mighty and mysterious depth of wisdom and infinity of love, no finite mind can ever fathom.

And while I do not believe that Channing's own growth was hindered, or the beauty and saintliness of his character in any degree marred by (what seems to me) the defectiveness of his Christology, I nevertheless think the inevitable tendency of his view was and is to lead the inquirer away from one of the sublimest of truths, and thus measurably to interfere with the world's highest progress. For many will see, as multitudes have already seen, the lack of harmony and consistency in his view; and seeing this, and seeing no other way of escape while the fundamental premise is adhered to, they will drift, by the inevitable force of logic, into a simple humanitarianism, which, I am confident, has far less power than Swedenborg's great doctrine of the Divine Humanity, to move the world and carry it onward and upward towards the higher life.

LVIII.

CONCLUSION.

IT was my intention at the commencement of this work, to have pointed out the difference, or apparent difference, between Swedenborg and Channing on one or two other subjects; but as my main object has been to call attention to the many and marvelous agreements between these writers, I therefore pass by their differences without further-remark. And I do this the more willingly, because the too prevalent custom among Christian teachers hitherto, has been to dwell upon and magnify these latter rather than the former; thereby raising higher and higher the partition walls which divide the different denominations, and fostering alienation if not hostility among the different branches of the great household of Christ. If there is to be any magnifying, I think it wiser and better and more promotive of the cause of peace, union and progress among Christians, that they magnify the points whereon they agree, rather than those on which they differ. It is certainly wise and safe to place the *emphasis* on our agreements rather than on our differences.

The students of Swedenborg will see from the extracts in the foregoing pages — and most of them, I doubt not, will rejoice at seeing — that many, and among them some of the most vital, truths of the New Church are to be found in the writings of the gifted Channing. They will rejoice to learn that so many of the precious verities which have

brought light and comfort to their own souls, are being read and accepted by hundreds of families, and proclaimed from hundreds of pulpits, where possibly they had been wont to think that but little of heaven's clear light had penetrated. Nor will their joy be diminished but rather increased, on learning that these truths came to Channing in a way not very unlike that in which they came to Swedenborg — that is, from the Lord out of heaven, by interior revelation or rational enlightenment. And while they will not value the writings of Swedenborg one iota less, they will prize those of Channing more, and in their hearts give thanks and rejoice at the many and diverse ways in which the Lord moulds and presents the precious truths of heaven in accommodation to the various states of his children.

And the students of Channing will here learn that the seer of Stockholm, whom most of them have probably been in the habit of regarding as an amiable but wild and deluded visionary, was one of the profoundest thinkers, ablest reasoners, wisest writers, clearest seers of good and truth — in short, one of the most highly illumined men — that has ever blest our world. Or, if they do not learn all this from the few extracts here given, they will learn sufficient, I hope, to convince them that the world's (and possibly their own) general estimate of Swedenborg is entirely wrong; and learning this, and then patiently following up the inquiry which the lesson will naturally suggest, they may at length come to see that I have not here spoken extravagantly: nay, more — that, had I placed this man not merely *among* the most enlightened men, but *far above all* whose histories or works have come down

to us, I should not have transcended the bounds of moderation or of truth.

But whatever judgment may be formed as to the relative degree of enlightenment of these two men, or the relative measure of wisdom to be found in their writings, it cannot be denied that they both saw with equal clearness the errors of the old theologies, exposed them with equal freedom, and rejected them with equal emphasis as alike unscriptural, unreasonable, untrue and unwholesome. Nor can it be denied that they both exalted character or *righteousness of life* above everything else, holding love to the Lord and the neighbor to be of paramount importance, and valuing all other things—institutions, creeds, churches, doctrines, forms of worship — only according to their efficacy in developing this. And both were alike large, generous, and catholic in spirit, insisting that the true church of the Lord is larger than any sect — larger than any religion, even — consisting of the good and faithful of every name and creed, in Heathendom as well as in Christendom.

Now let this spirit be everywhere encouraged and cultivated, and let that which both these writers so earnestly insist upon as the central principle of the Gospel of Christ, be accepted as such in all the churches, and what a change would erelong pass over our Christian communities — yes, over our whole Christian civilization! Church schisms would no longer be possible, for intellectual and religious liberty would be everywhere respected and encouraged. Individuals and churches would then be held in esteem for their character more than for their creeds. There would be some difference in people's beliefs, giving

rise to different denominations or sects; but the mischievous and loathsome spirit of sect would be everywhere cast out. Christian life and character — a sweet and gentle temper, patience in suffering, resignation under sore trials, a noble self-forgetfulness and self-denial, a generous devotion to others' welfare, a wise consecration of time, talents and wealth to the highest uses, an unswerving love of justice, fidelity in the discharge of every known duty, a humble, trustful, loving and forgiving spirit — these, accompanied by a devout acknowledgment of Him from whom all good dispositions and all right feelings proceed, would be held up as the things of chief concern and highest worth, and surer tests of Christian discipleship than any mere articles of belief however true or venerable. There would be but one party in all the churches, and this would be the party of freedom, progress and toleration; the party seeking, as the object of supreme interest, an inward personal renewal after the image of the Lord Jesus Christ; the party resolutely bent on overcoming, through the strength of the Almighty, the despotic kingdom of Satan — the demons of pride, avarice, hatred, selfishness, lust, and all the infernal dispositions which defile the temple of the Lord, and establishing in their stead the opposite heavenly dispositions — Christ's own kingdom of righteousness and peace.

And would not this be, indeed, a new and very real coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Would it not be a very real fulfilment of the promise concerning his Second Advent, which was to be "with power and great glory"?

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

THE END.